United Nations CRC/C/SR.2282

Convention on the Rights of the Child

Distr.: General
February 2018

Original: English

Committee on the Rights of the Child

Seventy-seventh session

Summary record (partial)* of the 2282nd meeting**
Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Friday, 2 February 2018, at 3 p.m.

Chair: Ms. Winter

Contents

Closure of the session

* No summary record was prepared for the rest of the meeting.
** No summary record was issued for the 2281st meeting.

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1801674

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The discussion covered in the summary record began at 5.05 p.m.

Closure of the session

1. **The Chair** said that, as of 2 February 2018, there were 196 States parties to the Convention on the Rights of the Child. As of the same date, 167 States parties had ratified or acceded to the Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict, while 174 States parties had ratified or acceded to the Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography. Thirty-seven States parties had ratified or acceded to the Optional Protocol on a communications procedure.

2. During the session, the Committee had considered eight reports, all under the Convention, from the following eight countries: Guatemala, the Marshall Islands, Palau, Panama, Seychelles, Solomon Islands, Spain and Sri Lanka. The consideration of the reports of the Marshall Islands, Palau and Solomon Islands had taken place by videoconference. She took it that the Committee wished to adopt the concluding observations that had been drawn up for those eight States parties.

3. *It was so decided.*

4. The Committee had reviewed the information it had received under the Optional Protocol on a communications procedure. In that context, it had reviewed three communications. In respect of communication No. 3/2016, *K.Y.M. v. Denmark*, the Committee had found a violation of the Convention by the State party. It had found communication No. 10/2017, *B.S.S. et al. v. France*, inadmissible and had decided to discontinue consideration of communication No. 18/2017.

5. The Committee had continued its work on the simplified reporting procedure. It had also begun revising general comment No. 10 (2007) on children's rights in juvenile justice and preparing for its next day of general discussion, entitled "Protecting and empowering children human rights defenders", which would be held in September 2018.

6. The Committee's seventy-eighth session would take place from 14 May to 1 June 2018. The programme of work would be posted on the website of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in the coming weeks.

7. **Mr. Gastaud** (Rapporteur) said that Committee members had taken part in a number of activities related to their mandate since the closure of the seventy-sixth session in late September 2017. The Chair had participated in events in the United States of America, Georgia, Switzerland, Belgium, Kazakhstan and Ukraine on a wide variety of topics, including the work of the Committee, juvenile justice and children's ombudsmen. At a round table in Kyiv, she had discussed child protection with representatives of the Government of Ukraine.

8. In November, Ms. Aldoseri had given a talk at an international conference in Kuwait City on the rights of Palestinian children. Her talk had concerned the violence to which those children were subjected. Mr. Kotrane had given a presentation at the same conference concerning violations of the rights of Palestinian children as addressed in the Committee's concluding observations on the combined second to fourth periodic reports of Israel (CRC/C/ISR/CO/2-4).

9. In October, Ms. Ayoubi Idrissi had participated in a comparative law conference in Rome organized by universities from Italy and Morocco and the courts of cassation of those countries. She had also participated in a conference at the headquarters of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development on the topic of investing for the rights of the child. Ms. Khazova had represented the Committee at the seventh meeting of the Special Commission on the practical operation of the 1980 Child Abduction Convention and the 1996 Child Protection Convention, which had been held in the Netherlands.

10. Mr. Lumina had represented the Committee at the twenty-third session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, held in Bonn, Germany. He had been a panellist at two side events and met with representatives of YOUNGO, a coalition of youth organizations granted constituency status by the secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

11. In October, Mr. Mezmur had taken part in an international congress in Rome on the dignity of the child in the digital world and had given a talk to representatives of Save the Children in Geneva. In November, he had helped moderate a meeting of non-governmental organizations working to combat child marriage and given a talk at a summit in São Paulo, Brazil, on the legal rights of street-connected children and youth. He had also participated in a discussion of the work of the Committee at a symposium in Geneva.

12. In October, Mr. Madi had participated in discussions in Geneva on harmonizing follow-up to treaty body concluding observations. In November, he had given a presentation at a regional conference in Athens on joint general comment No. 3 (2017) of the Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families and No. 22 (2017) of the Committee on the Rights of the Child on the general principles regarding the human rights of children in the context of international migration. Also in November, Mr. Nelson had given a talk on the Convention, the work of the Committee and the relationship of corporal punishment to domestic violence at a workshop in Samoa.

13. Ms. Otani had participated in a number of meetings and other events related to children's rights. They had included a side event in Geneva in late September on the right to education and events in India and Japan in October on the prohibition of corporal punishment, among other issues. In November, she had given a keynote speech at a conference in Sofia organized by the Asia-Europe Foundation. Later in the month, she had delivered another keynote speech at a symposium in Tokyo. She had also participated in the international summit in São Paulo attended by a number of other Committee members and in several events in Japan, including a symposium in Kumamoto, where she had been a keynote speaker. In December, she had represented the Committee at the launch in New York of its joint general comment with the Committee on Migrant Workers.

14. In November, Mr. Pedernera Reyna, together with the Vice-Chair of the Committee on Migrant Workers, had presented the newly adopted joint general comment in Buenos Aires. He had given a similar presentation, by videoconference, at a meeting of regional officials in El Salvador later in the month. In December, in Panama City, he had given a talk on general comment No. 10. In Quito, together with Mr. Rodríguez Reyes, he had participated in meetings organized to present and disseminate the recommendations transmitted to Ecuador by the Committee.

15. In October, Ms. Sandberg had given a talk on the right to participation at a seminar in Helsinki and, in November, she had organized a seminar for Scandinavian academics researching children's rights and the law. Ms. Skelton had participated in a conference in Belfast, United Kingdom, and at the international summit in São Paulo she had given a speech on general comment No. 21 (2017) on children in street situations.

16. In October, by invitation of the United Nations Association of Bulgaria, Ms. Todorova had given a presentation on the Committee's mandate. In November, she had participated in events in Sofia and Minsk. At the seminar in Minsk, she had given a talk on the establishment and development of national human rights institutions for children.

17. Mr. Gastaud himself had given a presentation on general comment No. 21 at the annual general assembly of the Consortium for Street Children, which had been held in London in November. Later in November, at the international summit in São Paulo, he had delivered a keynote speech on the implementation of that general comment.

18. On 31 January 2018, Committee members and representatives of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) had held their sixth biennial meeting. They had discussed ways of strengthening their partnership, sharing information and enhancing the implementation by States parties of the recommendations made by the Committee in its concluding observations. The Committee's tenth informal meeting with States, at which the representatives of the States in attendance had been informed of the Committee's work, had been held on 1 February 2018.

19. The working group responsible for revising general comment No. 10, coordinated by Mr. Jean Zermatten, a former chair of the Committee, had considered the first draft of revisions to the general comment at a meeting held during the session. The working group

tasked with developing a method of enabling children to participate in the next day of general discussion, coordinated by Ms. Sandberg, had considered an advance draft of a proposal for such a method, while another group coordinated by Ms. Sandberg had looked into issues related to the simplified reporting procedure. The group on working methods, coordinated by Mr. Cardona Lorens and Ms. Otani, had begun codifying the Committee's practices.

20. The working group established to consider possible amendments to the Committee's rules of procedure, coordinated by Mr. Madi, was expected to continue discussing those amendments in the light of additional information. The working group coordinated by Ms. Otani and Mr. Pedernera Reyna that was responsible for preparing the day of general discussion to be held in September 2018 had held a number of meetings to discuss related issues. The group set up to draft guidelines for the preparation of reports under the Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, coordinated by Ms. Khazova, had pursued its work, as had the group coordinated by Mr. Mezmur, which was considering how to incorporate references to the Sustainable Development Goals into the Committee's concluding observations.

21. During the session, Committee members had met in Geneva with specialists in a number of fields. Those meetings had included discussions with representatives of Terre des Hommes International Federation, who had presented an account of the recommendations related to climate change that had appeared in the Committee's concluding observations. Discussions with other specialists had covered such matters as Roma children who were incarcerated with their parents and the possible adoption of a general comment on terrorism and the rights of the child. Representatives of the World Federation of the Deaf had explained their work, while members of a Latin American network on the right to health, both children and adults, had given a presentation on good health practices in Latin America. Members of the independent international fact-finding mission on Myanmar had briefed the Committee on the rights of Rohingya children in Myanmar.

22. **The Chair** said she took it that the Committee wished to adopt the report on its seventy-seventh session.

23. *It was so decided.*

24. **The Chair** declared closed the seventy-seventh session of the Committee on the Rights of the Child.

The meeting rose at 5.30 p.m.

United Nations CRC/C/SR.2283

Convention on the Rights of the Child

Distr.: General
16 May 2018

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Committee on the Rights of the Child
Seventy-eighth session

Summary record (partial)* of the 2283rd meeting
Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Monday, 14 May 2018, at 10 a.m.

Chair: Ms. Winter

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Opening of the session

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Adoption of the agenda

* No summary record was prepared for the rest of the meeting.

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Opening of the session

1. **The Chair** declared open the seventy-eighth session of the Committee on the Rights of the Child.

Opening statement by the representative of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

2. **Mr. Abdelmoula** (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)) said that he wished to express the condolences of the Office to the Committee on the death of former Committee member Mr. Nogueira Neto, who had been an enthusiastic and committed defender of children's rights.

3. Almost 30 years since the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and despite its nearly universal ratification, children still faced huge challenges to having their rights recognized and enforced. According to a recent report by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), 1 billion children were either effectively uncounted or living in countries where the promise of the Sustainable Development Goals remained out of reach. Projections for the future were dire: in the years up to 2030, 10 million children would die from preventable causes before their fifth birthday, 31 million would be stunted owing to inadequate nutrition and 22 million would miss out on pre-primary education. The world had 12 years to reverse those trends and reach the targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The work of the Committee in assisting States parties to comply with their duties was indispensable in that regard.

4. With negotiations on the global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration drawing to a close, it was crucial that the future global framework for cooperation on migration should provide adequate protection of children's rights. Child protection and welfare should be a primary consideration in all migration policies and practices. He had thus been pleased to learn that the two joint general comments issued by the Committee on the Rights of the Child and the Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families had been shared with the co-facilitators leading the intergovernmental process.

5. He noted with satisfaction that the preparations for the Committee's forthcoming day of general discussion on protecting and empowering children as human rights defenders were proceeding well. He welcomed in particular the contribution of the children's advisory team established by Child Rights Connect to those preparations and to the draft working methods on child participation in days of general discussion being developed by the Committee. He hoped that the Committee's practice would serve as an example to other bodies, such as the Human Rights Council, and encourage more active participation of children in their sessions. It was important that children's voices should be heard.

6. At its seventy-second session, the General Assembly had taken a number of decisions that had serious implications for OHCHR and the human rights treaty bodies, including insufficient resources for the Committee's work on individual communications under article 5 of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on a communications procedure. While OHCHR was currently looking into ways of adjusting to the situation, it might not be possible to provide the same level of support for some activities as in the past. The situation would be addressed in the second of the reports that the Secretary-General was to present to the General Assembly pursuant to Assembly resolution 68/268. Needless to say, OHCHR remained committed to providing all treaty bodies with the highest quality of support and it would review the situation if the outlook improved in the future.

7. Several Member States and private foundations had provided funding to launch the global study on the situation of children deprived of liberty. The number of children deprived of their liberty would be counted from 26 June 2018, with States parties expected to submit completed questionnaires by 1 September 2018. The study would be finalized by June 2019 for presentation to the General Assembly in September of the same year.

8. The Human Rights Council would hold a full-day meeting in March 2019 on the theme "Empowering children with disabilities for the enjoyment of their human rights, including through inclusive education". Through its Management Plan 2018–2021, OHCHR had made young people a spotlight population for the work of the Office. A report on the human rights of youth was being prepared for submission to the Human Rights Council in September 2018, and a resolution on the topic was expected.

Submission of reports by States parties

9. **Ms. Franchetti** (Secretary of the Committee) said that 9 reports had been received since the previous session, bringing the number of reports pending consideration to 46. Australia, Austria, the Cook Islands, El Salvador, Micronesia, Mozambique, Portugal, Tonga and Tuvalu had submitted reports on the implementation of the Convention. The initial reports of Somalia, South Sudan and the State of Palestine were overdue. The number of States that had ratified the Convention remained unchanged at 196.

10. The number of ratifications of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict and the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography remained unchanged at 167 and 174, respectively. The number of ratifications of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on a communications procedure remained at 37.

Organizational matters

11. **The Chair**, reviewing the items on the agenda, said that the Committee would examine nine reports submitted by seven States parties: Algeria, Angola, Argentina, Lesotho, Montenegro, Norway and the Russian Federation.

12. She welcomed the many partners who contributed to the Committee's work. Discussions would continue on the Committee's methods of work, especially in connection with the Optional Protocol on a communications procedure, and the treaty body strengthening process. Any communications or information received relating to the Optional Protocol on a communications procedure would also be considered. The Committee would continue preparations for the forthcoming day of general discussion, continue its revision of its general comment No. 10 (2007) on children's rights in juvenile justice and discuss any other matters relating to its work.

Adoption of the agenda (CRC/C/78/1)

13. *The agenda was adopted.*

The discussion covered in the summary record ended at 10.25 a.m.

United Nations CRC/C/SR.2284

Convention on the Rights of the Child

Distr.: General
23 May 2018

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Committee on the Rights of the Child
Seventy-eighth session

Summary record of the 2284th meeting
Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Monday, 14 May 2018, at 3 p.m.

Chair: Ms. Winter

Contents

Consideration of reports of States parties

Combined fifth and sixth periodic reports of Argentina

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The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Consideration of reports of States parties

Combined fifth and sixth periodic reports of Argentina (CRC/C/ARG/5-6; CRC/C/ARG/Q/5-6 and CRC/C/ARG/Q/5-6/Add.1)

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of Argentina took places at the Committee table.*

2. **Mr. Castelli** (Argentina) said that his Government was fully committed to providing children, who made up approximately one third of the total population, with comprehensive protection of their rights. To that end, it actively promoted a holistic and intersectoral approach across all levels of government. The engagement of the private sector and civil society organizations was crucial in complementing the State's efforts.

3. As in many other countries in the region, levels of poverty among children were higher than among the general population. In order to address that situation, the Government had strengthened the family allowance system and was moving towards establishing a minimum income for the most vulnerable households. It had, for example, made self-employed workers eligible for child, prenatal and educational benefits, thereby protecting an additional 300,000 children. In order to identify vulnerable persons not covered by the minimum income, a national survey of working-class districts had been conducted in 2016, focusing on young people eligible for but not receiving the universal child allowance. Thanks to such efforts and economic growth, the overall poverty rate had fallen by 3 percentage points.

4. A number of other public policy measures had been taken to address the multidimensional challenges faced by children living in situations of vulnerability. For example, in the area of health care, programmes had been introduced relating to adolescent health, indigenous health, and sexual health and responsible parenthood. In the field of justice, steps had been taken to tackle cybercrime, child pornography, trafficking in persons and institutional violence.

5. Intersectoral cooperation was central to developing and implementing effective public policies to improve coordinated action and the impact of the Government's holistic approach to children's rights. For example, the National Plan for the Prevention and Reduction of Unintended Pregnancy among Adolescents was being implemented jointly by the Ministries of Social Development, Education and Health in cooperation with bodies at the provincial and local levels. For its part, the Federal Council for Children, Adolescents and the Family promoted public policy exchange and development between national and provincial administrations.

6. Early childhood development was a priority for the Government. Measures introduced included the National Early Childhood Plan, which focused on the first 1,000 days of a child's life and placed special emphasis on nutrition, education, child-rearing and early stimulation. The Government aimed to extend universal basic education to children aged from 3 to 5 years by building new classrooms, providing equipment and ensuring continued teacher training. The gross school attendance rate of three-year olds had risen by 11 per cent between 2016 and 2017, while, in 2017, the attendance rate was 88 per cent and 97.4 per cent among 4- and 5-year olds respectively.

7. A number of measures had also been taken to address the specific problems faced by adolescents. Under a national plan to prevent, punish and eliminate violence against women launched in 2017, assistance was provided to girls aged 16 and 17, the age group most likely to experience gender-based violence. In order to prevent school dropout among adolescents, the Ministry of Education had implemented a programme for young people aged between 12 and 20 at risk of leaving school early. The programme placed young people at the centre of education policy, addressed issues affecting their schooling and promoted shared responsibility among relevant social actors. Steps had also been taken to strengthen the juvenile justice system to ensure that the rights of young people were properly respected in line with relevant international standards.

8. Convinced that social investment in children and adolescents was the most effective way to break the intergenerational cycle of poverty, the Government was firmly committed to continuing to build on the work carried out so far.

9. **Mr. Cardona Llorens** (Coordinator, Country Task Force) said that he wished to commend the State party on the significant progress made in a number of areas to enhance children's exercise of their rights. However, the Committee was concerned about the negative impact that any financial adjustments required by the agreement being negotiated between the State party and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) might have on future social programmes.

10. With respect to the interpretative declaration of the State party on article 24 (f) of the Convention regarding the concept of family planning, he asked whether the declaration had been rendered obsolete in all of the country's provinces and could therefore be withdrawn. Noting that the 2005 National Act on Comprehensive Protection of the Rights of Children and Adolescents had not yet been implemented in several provinces and that other provinces had not made the necessary legislative adjustments, he wished to know what steps the Government had taken or planned to take to address that situation and, more generally, what it was doing to tackle disparities among provinces in complying with child rights legislation.

11. The decentralized system of governance made it difficult for the State to provide a coordinated response through the various bodies that made up the comprehensive rights protection system. It would be interesting to know whether the Government had reviewed the situation and, if so, what action it planned to take. In that connection, he would welcome clarification of how the Federal Council for Children, Adolescents and the Family coordinated with bodies operating in sectors such as education, health care and employment, in particular in the development of social policies concerning children and adolescents.

12. He would like to know whether reports that the National Secretariat for Children, Young Persons and the Family had used less than half of its budget allocation in 2016 were accurate and, if so, why the budget not been used. Information would be welcome on the outcome of the assessment carried out of the National Action Plan 2012–2015 and on whether the corresponding 2016–2019 plan had clear goals and budget allocations and whether it would be subject to an interim review. He asked whether the Government had held consultations at the provincial level about the National Early Childhood Plan prior to its adoption in 2015 and, more generally, how national plans were developed and how the Government coordinated with provinces during their development. Information would be appreciated on the role played by civil society organizations in developing national plans and strategies and whether any body had yet been established to facilitate their participation in that regard.

13. Despite the progress made in data collection, gaps continued to exist in certain areas; for example, the most recent information on nutrition among children and adolescents dated from 2004 and no disaggregated data were available for indigenous children, particularly those in rural areas, or for children and adolescents with disabilities. He would therefore welcome information on measures taken to improve the situation.

14. Regarding corporate social responsibility, he wished to know whether there was any State obligation to ensure that companies respected the rights of children and adolescents, as many companies were reportedly unaware of the existence of protective standards within their fields. In that regard, he wished to know whether the Government had established agreements against child labour with all tobacco growers. He asked whether prior consultations with indigenous communities regarding, for example, mining projects were conducted in a culturally appropriate way and, in particular, whether indigenous children were included in the process.

15. Although the Civil Code set the marriageable age at 18, marriage continued to be allowed from the age of 16 with parental consent. He asked whether in practice such marriages occurred and whether the Government planned to amend the Code to remove any exceptions to the minimum age requirement of 18 years. What action was the Government taking to address and raise awareness of cohabiting unions between girls under 18 and men over 18?

16. Despite progress in legislation and policymaking, many children and adolescents still faced de facto discrimination, such as poor children and adolescents, migrants, particularly from Bolivia and Paraguay, indigenous children and adolescents, children and adolescents with disabilities and those in the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex community. What was the Government doing to raise awareness of such discrimination and combat it?

17. He wished to know whether the Government had established a body to facilitate the right of the child to be heard. Given the high rate of suicide among adolescents, particularly in centres of deprivation of liberty, it would be helpful to know whether the Government had studied cases of adolescent suicide and, if so, how it planned to address the issue.

18. **Mr. Pedernera Reyna** (Country Task Force) said that, although provision for an ombudsman's office for children had existed in law since 2005, that institution had yet to be established. He hoped the delegation could explain why its creation had been delayed for so long and what measures were being contemplated to expedite it. The eventual appointment of the ombudsman should be a transparent and inclusive process that also involved the wider community, and the institution should be financially and administratively independent, in line with international standards.

19. He commended the State for having established a national preventive mechanism, in accordance with the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. He wished to know if the mechanism was already operational and if its mandate also extended to places of detention of minors, particularly as the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) had recently reported that 31 per cent of children in detention claimed to have suffered torture.

20. The Committee had received information from various sources detailing alarming episodes of police action against children including violent interventions in educational institutions, arbitrary detention, ill-treatment, threats, torture and even death. He would welcome information on a number of individual cases, including that of Luciano Arruga, who had been detained, tortured and disappeared, and be interested to hear an explanation of the reasons behind such violent behaviour and what steps were being contemplated to put a stop to it. The Committee was particularly concerned about the apparent impunity and lack of investigation. Was it true, as the Committee had heard, that the police applied a doctrine known as "*Chocobar*" whereby lethal violence was used as a first resort? It would be interesting to hear more details about any mechanisms in place to help victims, including access to reparation, and any plans to purge and reform the security forces.

21. He was pleased to note that some progress had been made, particularly in legislation, towards banning corporal punishment, but he remained concerned that the relevant provisions did not seem to be applied across the whole of national territory. He commended the Government for having signed a MERCOSUR agreement rejecting the existence of so-called parental alienation syndrome as a means of overriding the word of a child and wished to know what steps were being taken to ensure that the principles contained in the agreement were applied in courts throughout the country.

22. He welcomed measures being taken to combat human trafficking and sexual abuse, including the approval of Act No. 26842 of 2002, the creation of the Federal Council for Combating Trafficking in Persons and the introduction of amendments to the Criminal Code. However, the victims of such crimes remained extremely vulnerable, and he would like to know what further measures were being contemplated to protect them and ensure they could exercise their right to be heard by the courts without risk of revictimization. The Committee remained concerned about information it had received that indigenous people, including children, were being violently evicted from ancestral lands.

23. **Mr. Lumina** (Country Task Force) said that he was concerned about the allocation and use of resources, particularly in the light of recent spending cuts and the proposed IMF bailout programme. He hoped the delegation could provide information about how the austerity measures implemented by the Government since 2015 had affected children's rights. Had any official assessment of the impact of such measures been conducted and, on the basis thereof, had any action been taken to mitigate that impact?

24. He wished to know if any steps had been taken to ensure the sustainability of education, health-care and child welfare programmes, such as the National Early Childhood Plan and the universal child allowance, particularly given the country's high foreign debt and following the recent removal of export tariffs on a number of commodities, which had previously been used to fund the public coffers. Had the Government taken any specific steps to assess the possible impact of the proposed IMF bailout and to ensure that it did not result in reduced social spending on children?

25. The Committee would be interested to hear about actions being taken to ensure that budgetary allocations for children were not wasted on corrupt public procurement processes. It was a troubling fact that Argentine law did not seem to provide for corporate criminal liability for corruption, and he wished to know what was being done to prevent corrupt practices by corporate entities. Could the delegation explain what measures were being taken to address apparent disparities in the allocation of resources between different provinces?

26. **Ms. Sandberg** (Country Task Force) said that, despite the efforts made by the authorities, in some provinces up to 10 per cent of births were still unregistered. She wished to know what measures were being contemplated to resolve that problem, which particularly affected teenage mothers. She would welcome more information about any plans to implement a statelessness determination procedure, and she wished to know if the Government intended to incorporate the guarantees enshrined in the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons into domestic legislation.

27. Although youth centres did provide spaces in which young people could express their views, the Committee was concerned that the young remained underrepresented in the country's mass media, and she hoped to hear about action being taken to improve that state of affairs. She would also be interested to hear the delegation's views on reports that adolescents were sometimes prevented by the police from participating in public demonstrations, particularly in Buenos Aires.

28. The delegation should indicate what was being done to ensure that children across the country, particularly indigenous and migrant children and those living in remote and rural areas, had access to appropriate information, especially via the Internet, while being protected from harmful content. She hoped to learn more about the current status of a proposed bill on audiovisual communication services and about the Advisory Council on Audiovisual Communication and Children. Was the Council currently functioning and would it be maintained under the new bill? Finally, she wished to know whether recent measures to present a more positive image of children and adolescents in the media had been evaluated and whether further action was contemplated to combat negative stereotypes in that regard.

The meeting was suspended at 3.55 p.m. and resumed at 4.25 p.m.

29. **Mr. Cohan** (Argentina) said that it was too early to provide detailed information about the impact of the proposed IMF bailout as negotiations were still at a preliminary stage. It was not, however, expected to lead to an interruption in the policy of gradual fiscal consolidation, which the country had been pursuing since 2015. In that year, the incoming Government had inherited a primary deficit that had amounted to 5 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP). Thanks to considerable efforts, that figure had been reduced and was expected to stand at between 2 and 3 per cent of GDP by the end of 2018.

30. The Government's austerity measures had had no impact on social expenditure, which had actually increased during the period 2015–2018. In particular, expenditure on the social welfare of children had remained practically unchanged at 2.6 per cent of GDP since 2014. The sustainability of social programmes depended upon the sustainability of the country's public debt, which was expected to stabilize at between 35 and 40 per cent of GDP by 2020 and was not currently a source of concern.

31. Poverty had fallen by nearly 5 percentage points since the beginning of 2016. Since poverty indicators for the previous decade were unreliable, it was difficult to determine long-term trends but the most reliable estimates suggested that poverty was currently at its

lowest level since 2003. Argentina had enjoyed seven successive quarters of economic growth and, despite the foreign exchange crisis, that trend was expected to continue.

32. **Mr. Ibarzabal** (Argentina) said that the coverage of the universal child allowance had been extended over recent years, from 3,720,723 children in 2015 to 3,966,961 by the end of 2017. In January 2016, the authorities had identified 1.5 million children who were not included in the database of the National Social Security Administration and had no access to social security. Around 950,000 of them had now been duly registered, of whom around 18 per cent were receiving the universal child allowance. Eighty-four per cent of recipients of the allowance were from the two quintiles of the population with the lowest income levels, and 12.5 per cent of recipient households had managed to emerge from poverty in 2015. Although the allowance did not eliminate poverty per se, it was having a significant impact in other areas such as, for example, school enrolment rates.

33. More generally, the Government had taken a number of steps to ensure that more children and adolescents were covered by the social security umbrella: the system had been expanded to incorporate the children of taxpayers under the simplified tax regime and of temporary workers, the income ceiling for eligibility for family allowances had been raised and, as of March 2016, the family allowance and the universal child allowance were subject to an automatic twice-yearly rate adjustment. As of December 2017, the rate adjustments had been increased to four times a year.

34. **Mr. Castelli** (Argentina) said that Argentina was a federal State in which, since the 1990s, public policies in fields such as education, health care and social development had been decentralized and were, at least in theory, budgeted and administered autonomously at the provincial level. In practice, however, central Government complemented and funded a large proportion of social initiatives, to different degrees in different provinces. Activities in that regard were coordinated nationally by the National Council for the Coordination of Social Policies.

35. However, public policies developed at the national level, promoted by central Government and funded with national resources — such as the recent National Plan for the Prevention and Reduction of Unintended Pregnancy among Adolescents — were not adopted automatically. They also required the support of the provinces in order to become operational. If national public policies were not taken up and adopted by the provinces it was difficult to maintain continuity across changes of government, both at national and provincial level. That was a great challenge, not just in Argentina but across South America.

36. One such public policy was the National Early Childhood Plan, in the context of which agreements had been concluded with more than 1,600 public and private organizations to support vulnerable children up to the age of 4. In addition, proposals had been presented for the creation of new early childhood facilities or the improvement of existing ones.

37. **Mr. Candiano** (Argentina) said that 20 of the 24 federal entities in Argentina had their own laws on the protection of children's rights. Two provinces had endorsed the National Act on Comprehensive Protection of the Rights of Children and Adolescents, and a further two, Formosa and San Luis, had no specific laws of their own but had endorsed the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

38. The National Plan of Action for 2008–2015 had been evaluated and all unmet goals had been carried over to the current plan, adopted by the Federal Council for Children, Adolescents and the Family in November 2017 following a consultation process in which adolescents from every province had participated. Evaluation and follow-up of the action plan was carried out by the National Secretariat for Children, Young Persons and the Family with assistance from the National Council for the Coordination of Social Policies. The National Council had a sophisticated integrated information system and other tools that allowed it to collect and analyse data. All national social programmes were required to report on their progress to the National Council. The Human Development Office, meanwhile, had a more general coordinating role.

39. It was true that there were significant discrepancies between provinces in their implementation of policies on the protection of children's rights. The federal Government

was making a special effort to help the provinces where implementation was weakest, by providing them with additional tools and procedures. Training was key in that respect, and it was being provided with the help of, among others, civil society organizations, UNICEF and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). The empowerment of the provinces was perhaps best illustrated by the fact that child protection measures were increasingly being taken by provincial administrative bodies rather than the judiciary, with about 2 out of 3 such measures being taken by the provinces in 2015 and 9 out of 10 in 2017.

40. **Mr. Lumina** said that he could not reconcile the delegation's assurances that austerity measures were having no impact on the allocation of resources to the realization of children's rights with the information he had on cuts in government spending. The November 2016 fiscal agreement between provinces and central government entailed significant cuts to social security, targeting pensions and social welfare payments among other things; the cost to the City of Buenos Aires alone would amount to cuts of about US$ 3.4 billion. Moreover, further cuts to government spending on social security had been announced in December 2016. He also found it hard to reconcile the optimistic economic picture presented by the delegation, of reductions in the budget deficit and government borrowing, with the appraisal of IMF in its December 2017 report, issued after a meeting with the Government of Argentina. He would welcome any clarification the delegation could provide on those points.

41. **Mr. Cardona Llorens** asked if the various provincial laws on the protection of children's rights were all in line with national legislation and the Convention. Had he understood correctly that there was no specific law on that subject in place in two provinces?

42. **Mr. Castelli** (Argentina) said that his Government was indeed optimistic about the country's economic outlook. Its main task was to reduce the huge fiscal deficit it had inherited when it came to power. It was trying to do so gradually and in such a way as to spare the most vulnerable, for example by setting federal rates for certain public services. Its reform of the pension system was spread over a period of time and designed to avoid any loss of purchasing power for pensioners, whose pensions were inflation-linked. The Government ultimately intended to take advantage of steady economic growth to balance the budget by 2020 and keep government borrowing below a ceiling of 40 per cent of GDP.

43. **Mr. Cohan** (Argentina) said that there had been no cuts to social security benefits, thanks to the new indexation formula introduced by the Government. In fact, the social security reform had safeguarded benefits while avoiding what could have amounted to a 10 per cent increase in social security expenditure. Indeed, some benefits, such as payments under the historical reparation programme implemented in 2016, had been increased. Between 2015 and 2017, social expenditure had increased by one percentage point of GDP despite a cut of almost 5 per cent in total government spending.

44. With regard to the IMF report mentioned by Mr. Lumina, he said that in order to cut the budget deficit, the Government was continuing to borrow: the national debt was expected to have stabilized by 2020 once the budget had been balanced. He disagreed with the IMF view that Argentina was heading for a default as interest payments rose. With debt at a stable level, interest payments would remain stable too.

45. **Mr. Castelli** (Argentina) said that the laws of the provinces were under review, and that while they differed in the letter they were the same in spirit. The problem of discrepancies between them and differences in their interpretation was being addressed by means of shared protocols and improved training for judicial officers. The two provinces that had endorsed the Convention but had no specific laws of their own on children's rights were represented on the Federal Council for Children, Adolescents and the Family and, as such, had signed up to a number of agreements concerning children's rights, including proposals on the juvenile criminal justice system and support for children with no parental care.

46. **Ms. Dobniewsky** (Argentina) said that there had been delays in setting up the office of the children's ombudsman, but significant progress had been made. A large number of civil society organizations had been actively involved in the public consultations on establishing the office and numerous applications for the position had already been received. A bicameral congressional committee had been established and allocated a budget to

finalize the process; deputies had already been appointed to sit on the committee, and the appointment of senators was pending.

47. With regard to police violence, she acknowledged that institutional violence did exist in Argentina. A number of bodies had been set up to investigate and prevent such violence, and to hold law enforcement agencies that engaged in it to account. A national directorate had also been set up to investigate institutional violence, and any criminal behaviour uncovered would be prosecuted. The national mechanism for the prevention of torture had been operative since 2017, and five local preventive mechanisms had been set up. Those local mechanisms had intervened in places where children were deprived of their liberty; one result of their intervention had been the provision of training courses for guards. In addition, the Ministry of Security, in conjunction with the National Directorate on Policies to Combat Institutional Violence of the Ministry of Justice and Human Rights, had established a special unit in 2016 to study the causes of institutional violence, reduce the arbitrary use of force and follow up on complaints about such matters as detainees' lack of access to justice or medical treatment. Thanks to the preventive mechanisms, surveys had been conducted at the provincial level to determine where responsibility lay for inspecting conditions in detention centres; the bodies identified included ombudsman's offices, the prison inspectorate and the Commission for Historical Memory. Video surveillance cameras had been installed in places of detention to monitor detention conditions.

48. Referring to some specific cases raised by Committee members, she said that the police officer involved in the case of Jonathan "Kiki" Lezcano and Ezequiel Blanco had been acquitted on the grounds of self-defence after all possible appeals had been exhausted, but had nevertheless been dismissed from the force following an administrative investigation. The hearing in the case of the officer accused of torturing and robbing Ezequiel Villanueva Moya and Iván Navarro was under way even as she spoke. The police officer Diego Torales had been sentenced to 10 years' imprisonment for torturing 16-year-old Luciano Arruga. She would like to assure the Committee members that the eradication of institutional violence was a government priority.

49. **Ms. Fariña** (Argentina) said that a follow-up to a 2004 survey of child nutrition was due to be completed before the end of the year. The survey would give nutritionists a clearer picture of Argentine children's dietary habits. Blood tests would also be conducted to detect anaemia and determine the levels of folic acid in the blood of women of childbearing age.

50. While comprehensive data on child nutrition were not available, some 3 million children had come into contact with the health authorities in 2017 in the context of cash transfer programmes. Of those, about 10 per cent of children under the age of 5 years were either stunted or suffering from malnutrition. Most worryingly, some 29 per cent of children between the ages of 2 and 5 years, and 37 per cent of those between the ages of 6 and 19 years, were overweight or obese. The President of the Republic had made tackling obesity a government priority, and the health and education ministries were drawing up clear policies to address the problem.

51. With regard to indigenous children, a recent survey of 6,000 indigenous children under the age of 6 years had provided figures that presented a varied picture: 0.2 per cent were affected by emaciation; 0.05 to 0.8 per cent by stunting; and 0.3 to 4.8 per cent by obesity.

52. As for children with disabilities, the most recent national household survey showed that approximately 20 per cent of the households surveyed had someone with a disability; and about 30 per cent of those persons were children.

53. **Ms. Quinteros** (Argentina), responding to questions on birth registration, especially among indigenous children, said that every effort was being made to ensure that mobile registration units were available and deployed. Where no civil registry officials were available, other public sector employees were tasked with the job of drawing up birth certificates. The mobile units targeted the areas where the most vulnerable children were to be found, and their visit was publicized in advance.

54. On the question of statelessness, she said that it was a violation of the basic human right to a nationality, as recognized in many international instruments, including the American Convention on Human Rights. Argentina, as one of the signatories of the Brasilia Declaration on the Protection of Refugees and Stateless Persons in the Americas, was committed to preventing anyone from finding themselves stateless. A bill on the subject had been drafted with the help of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and was now before Congress.

55. **Mr. Foradori** (Argentina) said that various ministries had separate registers of human trafficking victims. An executive committee had been established, which comprised representatives from the government, civil society organizations and the national legislature, to coordinate the initiatives of the ministries in the area of human trafficking at the national level. The provincial authorities retained responsibility for registering victims of trafficking. The National Secretariat for Children, Young Persons and the Family ran a centre that registered victims with children under 4 years of age and provided a range of health services.

56. **Ms. Sandberg** said that she wished to know what measures were in place to prevent unnecessary gender assignment surgery or other medical treatments for children with intersex traits before they were able to make their own decisions.

57. She wondered whether the State party had evaluated the outcome of its measures and programmes to strengthen the family unit and to establish family bonds and parental responsibility from an early stage. It would also be helpful to know how the Government planned to further strengthen those measures to enable families to take proper care of their children, given that violence, abuse and neglect were main reasons for removing children from their families. She wished to hear about the system for taking children into alternative care, including mechanisms to ensure that it did not happen unnecessarily, with particular mention of the decision-making body concerned, the procedural safeguards and legal requirements in place, and how the child's best interests were assessed. Noting that a high proportion of children in alternative care were placed in institutions, she wished to know how the State party guaranteed that institutionalization was used as a last resort. Furthermore, she wondered what measures the Government was planning to take to increase the number of foster families and develop their caring abilities with a view to, among other things, expediting the lengthy process of removing children from institutions and preventing institutionalization in the first place. She would appreciate the delegation's comments on the apparent substandard quality of care for children in institutions, which might be due to a lack of central guidelines and insufficient resources, together with an explanation of the system for monitoring the quality of care and for reporting children's rights violations. In the light of reports of ill-treatment in centres for children with behavioural or social difficulties, she wished to know what the State party was doing to prevent such incidents and to address them once they had taken place. According to her information, a law that had been introduced to help young adults leaving care to live independently was not applied in all provinces. What plans, if any, did the State party have to remedy that situation?

58. She wondered why the State party did not consider the Convention on Protection of Children and Cooperation in respect of Intercountry Adoption to offer protection from trafficking and sale of children in intercountry adoption, and what additional steps the State party needed to take to be able to lift its reservation to article 21 (b), (c), (d) and (e) of the Convention.

59. It would be helpful to have data on the children of imprisoned parents. She asked whether the Government intended to introduce policies to support such children, by enabling them to visit their parents in prison, for example. Did the courts take the best interests of the children into account when sentencing parents?

60. She would appreciate further information on the State party's follow-up to the Committee's recommendations under the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict. In particular, she wished to know whether arms training for children in military schools had been prohibited, whether peace education had been introduced in all schools and whether the recruitment of

children in hostilities by armed groups had been criminalized. The delegation might wish to comment on efforts made to establish extraterritorial jurisdiction over the enlistment of children in hostilities and the measures taken to identify, assess the situation of and provide assistance to children used in hostilities abroad, including translation services for interacting with doctors and social workers. Was the sale of arms to countries where children might be used in hostilities specifically prohibited by law?

61. **Mr. Cardona Llorens** said that there was insufficient disaggregated data on children with disabilities. He wished to know whether the State party was aware of the data-collection system designed by UNICEF and the Washington Group on Disability Statistics and whether the Government intended to use it. Many provinces lacked legal provisions on the inclusion of children with disabilities and no law was in place at the national level. He wondered whether progress was being made in introducing laws in that connection in all the country's provinces. Regional disparities in terms of access to health care for children with disabilities were also cause for concern. It would be helpful to know what measures the State party had taken to improve programmes such as early disease detection, which were hindered by the scarcity of data. He wished to know what action the Government was taking to improve inclusive education given that, according to official government data from 2015, a quarter of children with disabilities between 5 and 17 years of age did not attend school. The Government had focused heavily on inclusive education. It would be interesting to hear whether separate special education schools still existed and, if so, who decided whether individual children should attend them. Children with disabilities were often marginalized in schools with scant resources. He wished to know what the Government was doing to address that problem and to reduce the significant disparity between the provinces in terms of education resources. He had found no documented information to back up claims that non-contributory pension entitlements for children with disabilities had been reinstated. He would appreciate an explanation in that regard, especially since the allocation for non-contributory pensions had significantly decreased in the 2018 budget. According to the Civil Code, children were able to make decisions regarding their health from the age of 16; however, no mention was made of the cases of children with intellectual disabilities. He asked whether only parents could authorize the sterilization of a girl with intellectual disabilities, or whether reasonable steps were taken to inform the girl concerned and allow her to decide.

62. He wished to know what steps had been taken to create a national commission that would systematically gather data on breastfeeding practices; how the State party oversaw the application of the International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes; and whether the Government promoted baby-friendly hospitals and encouraged the inclusion of breastfeeding in nursery training. He wondered whether there was a specific body that provided comprehensive support for children and adolescents who consumed psychoactive substances and, if so, what human and budgetary resources it had been allocated and how access was guaranteed to children and adolescents living in poverty. It would be useful to hear what measures were in place to prevent the stigmatization of children and adolescents who consumed drugs, particularly in the media. Information on the measures adopted to improve access to AIDS treatment would also be helpful.

63. The majority of infants under the age of 4 had no access to nursery schools, with significant disparities between the provinces. He wished to know what measures had been taken to improve the situation, especially in the wake of a study conducted by UNICEF that had found many nurseries to be of poor quality. He would also like to hear what measures the Government had taken in the light of its national learning evaluation, which had revealed that a significant percentage of pupils scored below average in core subjects. He invited the delegation to comment on data showing that 500,000 adolescents between the ages of 12 and 17 did not attend school and that only 45 per cent of the population completed secondary education.

64. **Mr. Pedernera Reyna** said that he wished to know what the arguments were for systematically denying legal abortions to girls who had been raped and why the justice system and the public prosecutor had taken no action in a number of rape cases.

65. There had been an increase in the use of medicines to treat behavioural issues among children and adolescents, especially for attention deficit disorder. It would be interesting to

know how the rights of the child were incorporated into mental health policy, and what measures the Government had adopted to advance in its obligation to gradually substitute special psychiatric hospitals with community-oriented institutions for children and adolescents. In the light of the country's current economic situation, it would be useful to hear what measures the State party would take to mitigate the impact of high inflation on food prices in particular.

66. Act No. 25871 on migration had been effective in safeguarding children's rights. However, a decree passed in 2017 amending the Act appeared to associate migrants with criminal activity and opened the possibility of institutionalizing children in deportation cases. He wished to know whether the State party had information on measures that had been taken under the new decree and whether the original provisions of the Act could be retained.

67. It would be helpful to have data on the number of children incarcerated with their mothers or fathers in prison and to know what steps the State party was taking to enable detained mothers to have permanent contact with the community and their families. He asked how the State party addressed the problem of providing documentation for babies born to mothers in prison, and what policies were being developed to encourage children of detained parents to remain in school.

68. It would be useful to know how many children lived on the streets, whether they were monitored, and what policies had been developed to care for them. In the light of the country's current economic situation, he wondered whether the Government had forecast the impact of cuts on low-income families. Commending the fact that the "Línea 102" helpline for children had been made available in 16 provinces, he said that it would be interesting to hear when the line would be made universally available and whether it would have a standardized procedure and be open 24 hours a day.

69. Argentina had no juvenile criminal law and the juvenile justice system had fewer safeguards than the adult system. Juveniles who had not committed offences continued to be detained, supposedly for their protection, and petty offences were met with a harsh response from the authorities. The proposed draft legislation on juvenile justice would therefore be welcome, provided that it met the standards of the Convention. He wished to know what stage the legislation was currently at; what the main areas covered were; whether it would establish new offences; and whether the age of criminal responsibility would be lowered. Would it comply with international standards in relation to the use of non-custodial sentences? He wondered why the justice system used imprisonment as a first response. It would be interesting to hear whether the conditions of detention of children and adolescents were subject to independent monitoring, what penalties officials accused of torture and ill-treatment faced, and how many cases of ill-treatment had been reported. Information would also be welcome on programmes to allow children and adolescents in detention access to education and recreational activities, how many children had such access and what non-custodial penalties existed. He wished to know whether judges monitored the enforcement of penalties and, if not, who did. He asked whether the deaths and suicides reported in several prisons around the country had been investigated and what policies were in place to prevent future occurrences.

70. He wished to know whether the Government would consider introducing specific provisions prohibiting and penalizing the sale of children in the civil, commercial and criminal codes. He would be grateful for additional information on the amendment to article 128 of the Criminal Code on child pornography. It would be helpful to have information on the procedures for identifying and caring for particularly vulnerable child victims of trafficking; on the national programme to rescue and support trafficking victims; on the establishment of shelters for victims; and on the investigations conducted in response to reports of trafficking and the trial and sentencing of perpetrators. Lastly, how did the State party promote international cooperation in terms of the sharing of information and harmonization of legal procedures in relation to human trafficking?

71. **Mr. Lumina** said that the fragmented health-care system and the lack of national standards had resulted in major differences in terms of clinical practices, resource allocation, quality and accessibility concerning health care across the provinces. He wished to know

what measures the Government had in place or planned to adopt to address that disparity. Furthermore, given that health expenditure had decreased by 40 per cent since 2011, he wondered how the Government ensured that children's access to quality health care was not affected.

72. He would appreciate information on efforts to address the well-documented adverse impact of agrochemicals on the health of children living in the vicinity of soya plantations. It would also be helpful to know what measures the Government was taking to address the issue of differing regulations on the use of agrochemicals between the provinces, which meant that rules were often disregarded.

73. With regard to asylum-seeking children, he wondered when the review of the Refugee Recognition and Protection Act (No. 26165) would be completed and when the revised regulation would enter into force. He asked whether the Government had reviewed the protocol on protection for unaccompanied child asylum seekers and, if so, what the outcome had been and how it would be followed up.

74. He wished to know what social programmes, if any, had been put in place to eradicate child labour, how effective such programmes were, and whether any of them specifically targeted children who begged on the street and guarded parked vehicles. He asked what the impact of the universal child allowance programme on reducing child labour had been. How many children had been removed from child labour and what support services had been provided to them?

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.

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Summary record of the 2285th meeting
Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Tuesday, 15 May 2018, at 10 a.m.

Chair: Ms. Winter

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Consideration of reports of States parties (*continued*)

Combined fifth and sixth periodic reports of Argentina (*continued*)

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The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

Consideration of reports of States parties (*continued*)

Combined fifth and sixth periodic reports of Argentina (*continued*) (CRC/C/ARG/5-6; CRC/C/ARG/Q/5-6 and CRC/C/ARG/Q/5-6/Add.1)

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of Argentina took places at the Committee table.*

2. **Ms. Fariña** (Argentina) said that the Ministry of Health had developed a number of policy documents on the prevention of suicide among adolescents. The main triggers of suicide among children and adolescents in Argentina included sexual abuse and ill-treatment, drug abuse, mental illness, serious physical illness, unwanted pregnancy and suicide contagion.

3. Promoting breastfeeding to reduce the risks of obesity and sudden infant death was one of the major policy objectives of the Ministry of Health's National Directorate of Maternal and Child Health. According to the most recent national breastfeeding survey, conducted in 2017, 42 per cent of infants up to 6 months of age were breastfed exclusively, which was an improvement on the results of the previous survey, which had been conducted two years earlier.

4. The Advisory Commission on Breastfeeding had been established more than 20 years earlier and was composed of representatives of a number of social welfare institutions, scientific societies and such non-governmental organizations as La Leche League Argentina. The Commission met two or three times a year. The activities carried out by the Ministry of Health in connection with breastfeeding included the efforts made as part of the baby-friendly hospital initiative. Those efforts involved awareness-raising, training and assessment and were made at the country's 65 baby-friendly hospitals and at 20 baby-friendly primary health-care centres, the number of which was expected to double in the coming years. Other activities were organized to help women continue breastfeeding their children as they returned to work from maternity leave. Employers were encouraged to participate in breastfeeding week. There was even a breastfeeding hotline. The Ministry of Health ensured compliance with the International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes as part of its efforts to promote the baby-friendly hospital initiative.

5. HIV infection rates in Argentina had stabilized several years earlier. In 2017, 6,500 persons had been diagnosed as HIV positive, and in all there were some 120,000 people living with HIV/AIDS in Argentina. Efforts were being made to reduce the mother-to-child infection rate of around 5 per cent. Thirty-nine health-care centres had earned a label specifically stating that they were friendly to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons. In 2017, the HIV hotline had responded to more than 6,000 queries. In addition, training had been given to health-care personnel working with adolescents in a number of provinces to enable them to carry out accelerated HIV tests and provide the necessary services to adolescents who tested positive. Initiatives had also been carried out to prevent the spread of sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS, among adolescents.

6. The country's interpretative declaration on article 24 (f) of the Convention, on family planning, did not have the effect of a reservation. Legislative developments subsequent to the declaration, nationally and in 18 of the country's 24 first-level administrative divisions, had in any event rendered it obsolete. As part of a national plan to reduce unintended pregnancy among adolescents, information on family planning was provided in schools, and efforts were being made to increase the use of contraceptives, including long-term contraceptive methods.

7. Increasingly, genital surgery on intersex children was postponed until the children themselves could express their views on the matter, especially if the surgery led to irreversible changes. Such infants generally underwent surgery or other medical procedures, such as gonadal biopsies, for medical reasons alone.

8. A protocol on the comprehensive care to be provided to women who had the right to abortion, which was legal in certain circumstances, such as a pregnancy resulting from rape,

had been updated in 2016. It had been updated to ensure that new legislative developments were taken into account.

9. **Mr. Rodríguez Reyes** said that he wished to know whether the State party had a system for collecting data on the number and kind of medical procedures undergone by children with intersex conditions. He also wished to know whether persons who had been put through genital surgery without their consent could seek justice in the State party's courts.

10. **Ms. Fariña** (Argentina) said that Argentina did not have centralized data on the medical procedures undergone by intersex children. Persons who had undergone such procedures as children could turn to the courts for redress under Act No. 26.743, the Gender Identity Act.

11. **Mr. Cardona Llorens** (Coordinator, Country Task Force) said that he wondered whether, in its efforts to promote breastfeeding, the State party was taking steps to ensure that maternity leaves in provinces where such leaves were less than 14 weeks were lengthened. As the State party had only two more baby-friendly hospitals than in 2010, when it had previously appeared before the Committee, he asked whether efforts were still being made to encourage the country's hospitals to seek that designation.

12. **Ms. Fariña** (Argentina) said that women who had given birth were entitled to at least three months' leave throughout the country. Consideration was being given to lengthening periods of parental leave for mothers and fathers. The 65 baby-friendly hospitals did not necessarily include the 63 of 2010, as some had closed and others had opened. Efforts were still being made to promote breastfeeding.

13. It could be difficult for women in the provinces to obtain an abortion to which they were entitled. Nonetheless, the Supreme Court had ruled that health-care personnel could be held accountable for their failure to take account of a patient's legitimate grounds for an abortion or their use of delaying tactics. An individual practitioner had the right to object to performing an abortion, but an institution did not. In the event of such a conscientious objection, the director of the institution was responsible for ensuring that the procedure was performed.

14. **The Chair** asked what would happen if all the doctors in a given hospital objected to performing an abortion.

15. **Ms. Fariña** (Argentina) said that the practical legalization of abortion in limited circumstances had not been carried out in the same way in every province in the country. In the provinces of Catamarca and Santa Fe, for example, there were groups of health-care workers who travelled from one facility to another to provide legal abortion services. In other provinces, such as Buenos Aires, a group of medical facilities provided such services. If all the doctors in a given facility refused to perform an abortion, it would have to be performed by the facility's director, who did not have the right of conscientious objection.

16. **Ms. Aho Assouma** said that she wished to know what the procedure for gaining access to antiretroviral therapy was and whether reproductive health services were made available to young people, in particular in schools. She would also welcome information about the prevalence and treatment of tuberculosis in the State party, especially in people living with HIV/AIDS. In addition, she wondered whether efforts to prevent mother-to-child transmission of HIV were made throughout the State party, including in remote areas.

17. **Ms. Fariña** (Argentina) said that 60 per cent of the persons with HIV/AIDS in Argentina were treated in the public health system, where they received access to antiretroviral drugs free of charge for as long as necessary. Some schools offered confidential health counselling and information to their students. That service, which was being offered in an increasing number of schools, was provided by a health-care worker, although not necessarily a doctor. Students could leave those counselling sessions with an appointment at the nearest health-care facility already made. Data on the prevalence of tuberculosis in Argentina could be provided in writing. Measures had been adopted to lower the rate of mother-to-child transmission of HIV. For example, the country currently had a policy of testing couples for sexually transmitted diseases early and late in the woman's pregnancy.

18. Under the National Mental Health Act, the commitment of a minor to a mental hospital or other such institution was considered an involuntary commitment. Reports of all such commitments were to be provided to the courts and the relevant oversight bodies within 10 hours. The Act also regulated the prescription of drugs for the treatment of such conditions as attention deficit disorder. In addition, guidelines had been developed to prevent school-related issues from leading to inappropriate medical diagnoses and treatment.

19. **Mr. Pedernera Reyna** (Country Task Force) asked whether the State party had information on the number of children who were on drugs like Ritalin for such conditions as attention deficit disorder.

20. **Ms. Fariña** (Argentina) said that many children with conditions such as attention deficit disorder were treated in the private health system. As a result, the public health authorities did not have access to their records or know how many were on medication such as Ritalin.

21. Environmental agencies were present throughout the country, and legislation on the use of agricultural chemicals had been adopted in 23 of the country's jurisdictions. Specific regulations had been adopted for the municipalities where agricultural activity was especially intense. Environmental targets had been included in a national plan on adolescent health, and in the provinces of Chubut and Córdoba young people themselves had brought environmental health issues to the attention of the authorities, who were responding to their concerns.

22. Maternal and infant mortality rates differed from one province to another. Over the past 10 years, however, the rates had fallen, in some cases, as in Chaco Province, by as much as 40 per cent. The Ministry of Health developed common policies and provided supplies for the improvement of maternal and child health in all the country's jurisdictions.

23. **Mr. Lumina** (Country Task Force) said that the delegation had not yet responded to his question regarding the reduction in health spending and the measures taken to ensure that it did not affect children's access to quality health care. In addition, he would appreciate more information on the steps taken to address the geographical disparities in the provision of quality health services.

24. **Ms. Fariña** (Argentina) said that health care was a priority for the Government and that there had been no reduction in the health funding granted to provincial authorities. On the contrary, additional support was made available to those authorities at their request.

25. **Mr. Castelli** (Argentina) said that the Government helped provincial authorities to cover the cost of particularly expensive treatments on an ad hoc basis.

26. **Mr. Candiano** (Argentina) said that popular consultations had been organized by the government of the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires to determine the approximate number of children in street situations. Measures had subsequently been taken to assist those children and their parents or guardians. New legislation that had been approved in 2017 established a mentoring scheme for children aged 13 years and above who were living in children's homes. Mentors were chosen by the children themselves from a list supplied by the authorities or from among their acquaintances. The National Secretariat for Children, Young Persons and the Family organized training for mentors, whose role was to provide information and support in all areas of life.

27. The National Secretariat was developing minimum standards of care and protocols for children's homes, in collaboration with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). Registers of children under exceptional protective measures were being created in some provinces. According to a national survey on support for children without parental care, around 10,500 children had benefited from exceptional protective measures in 2017.

28. **Ms. Sandberg** (Country Task Force) said that she would welcome more information on the practical measures being taken to give effect to the new law on mentoring, in view of reports that it had not been implemented effectively in all institutions throughout the country.

29. **Mr. Gastaud** said that he would like to know what steps were taken to identify and assist children in street situations who did not register at halfway houses; what kind of support was available to children in street situations and their families; whether a general policy had been drawn up in that area; and, if so, whether children had been involved in the development of that policy.

30. **Mr. Castelli** (Argentina) said that the process of enacting the new law on mentoring had not yet been completed. However, many of its provisions had already been implemented in the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires and Buenos Aires Province. There was no national system for the registration of children in street situations. Programmes for the protection of such children were run at the provincial level.

31. **Mr. Candiano** (Argentina) said that children in street situations who registered at halfway houses were offered food, clothing and additional support, such as a place in a children's home. Community centres for adolescents aged 13 to 17 years old had been set up in urban areas to combat violence against children and adolescents through cultural, recreational and educational activities. Guidance for adolescents was available in the form of information booklets and on the websites of various ministries. Awareness-raising on issues such as cyberbullying and child pornography had been conducted. An online platform had been set up to provide support and information to young persons dealing with issues such as bullying, child grooming and drug use.

32. The Secretariat for Comprehensive Drug Policies of Argentina was responsible for combating drug use among adolescents. It provided technical assistance and training to provincial authorities, community workers and civil society organizations and organized activities in collaboration with community centres for adolescents. It had developed teaching modules on the prevention of drug addiction which were being taught in schools throughout the country. It also promoted the prevention of drug addiction through art and sport by providing training for people working in those fields and by organizing events for young persons in particularly vulnerable areas of the country.

33. **Mr. Pedernera Reyna** asked whether children in institutions were no longer eligible for mentoring when they turned 18 years old. He further asked how many community centres for adolescents had been set up and where they were located.

34. **Mr. Candiano** (Argentina) said that mentoring was available for young people up to the age of 21 years old. Those who were enrolled in higher education continued to receive support until the age of 25 or until they had completed their studies. Handbooks on the mentoring scheme were being drafted in collaboration with UNICEF.

35. There were around 180 community centres for adolescents. Local authorities wishing to establish such a centre submitted an application to the national authorities, who provided funding for an initial period of eight months. Once that period had elapsed, the local authorities were responsible for funding the centre.

36. **Ms. Aho Assouma** said that she would like to know whether medical care for victims of violence or sexual abuse and young drug users was provided at community centres for adolescents or in hospitals and whether such persons received treatment from qualified specialists, including child psychiatrists.

37. **Mr. Candiano** (Argentina) said that community centres carried out screening and referred adolescents to health centres if necessary.

38. **Ms. Fariña** (Argentina) said that treatment for adolescent drug users was provided by public hospitals. In the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires and Buenos Aires Province, treatment was also provided by mobile clinics.

39. **Mr. Candiano** (Argentina) said that campaigns to combat alcohol abuse were under way, and a national addiction monitoring centre had been established. A recent national study on substance abuse in secondary schools had shown that almost 14 per cent of alcohol consumers were pre-adolescents and adolescents.

40. Guidelines on the protection of children's rights with respect to the media had been drawn up, based on recommendations from the National Secretariat for Children, Young

Persons and the Family. The National Secretariat had also submitted 17 principles to be included in the bill on communication that was currently before the parliament.

41. The Government had injected additional funding into the Early Years Programme with the aim of increasing its coverage to 180,000 families by 2020. Under that programme, which had been rolled out to 19 provinces, families received guidance on nutrition, breastfeeding, early stimulation and the prevention of domestic violence and child sexual abuse. Lastly, a survey conducted in 2016 had shown that 91 per cent of provinces had established a system to support victims of trafficking.

42. **Ms. Sandberg** enquired whether the 17 principles that were to be included in the bill on communication were related to child protection.

43. **Mr. Candiano** (Argentina) said that all 17 principles were related to the protection of children's rights. There had been no cases of suicide in closed juvenile detention centres since 2016. Two resolutions, on the supervision of those centres during rest periods and the working day of security personnel, had been adopted.

44. **Mr. Pedernera Reyna**, noting that the statistics he had mentioned with regard to suicide concerned the entire five-year review period, said that he would be interested to learn what specific measures had been taken to prevent suicide among adolescent detainees, besides the two resolutions that had been mentioned.

45. **Mr. Candiano** (Argentina) said that adolescent detainees at risk of suicide received support, including psychiatric treatment. The Government had adopted a plan to provide quality Internet access throughout the country. Steps were being taken to extend fibre optic coverage to 1,300 towns by the end of 2018. Internet access was currently available to almost three quarters of the population.

46. **Mr. Ibarzabal** (Argentina) said that the State party had launched a digital programme to provide students with laptops and familiarize them with the Internet. Six million laptops had been provided during the first phase of the programme over the past eight years. The results of the most recent annual quality of education survey had shown that almost all children had a mobile phone by the time they left secondary school and the majority had access to a computer at home. The second phase of the programme, which was ongoing, involved teaching children the necessary skills to leverage the technology to which they now had access.

47. With regard to the Committee's questions on disability, under the 2010 Migration Act, access to social security, and in particular disability benefit, was considered a human right. The Government provided three different types of disability benefit, without any age limits. The first was a contributory benefit linked to employment. The second was a non-contributory disability benefit for children, which could be claimed by parents or guardians in addition to universal child allowance. Foreign children or adolescents could claim disability benefits after having lived in the country for three years. The third, the pension for disability, was also non-contributory. In 2018, 132,000 individuals had received that pension, of whom 12 per cent were under the age of 18. The Government was working with UNICEF to improve data collection on children with disabilities. Furthermore, the National Institute for Statistics and Censuses had launched a national study on the profiles of persons with disabilities, which would inform public policy.

48. **Mr. Castelli** (Argentina) said that the budget for non-contributory benefits had not been reduced, in fact it was increasing as those benefits were adjusted twice a year. The budget appeared to have been reduced owing to institutional reorganization within the Government.

49. **Mr. Pedernera Reyna** said that he would like the State party to comment on reports that laptops would no longer be provided directly to children. He would like to know whether the programme was continuing.

50. **Mr. Ibarzabal** (Argentina) said that the programme was now in its second phase. In the light of the fact that a large majority of children now had access to a computer, the Ministry was focusing on providing information technology training. Laptops were still being provided to schools.

51. **Mr. Castelli** (Argentina) said that it was important to note that technology was developing so quickly that any information technology equipment was often obsolete within a couple of years.

52. **Mr. Cardona Llorens** asked whether disability benefits were being increased in line with inflation, which was very high in the State party. He said that he would be interested to know whether foreigners who were living and working legally in the country were able to access any social benefits within their first three years of residency. Noting that the Government did not have any reliable, comprehensive or disaggregated statistics regarding children with disabilities, he wondered how a lack of data affected measures taken in that area and whether a request had to be made for data to be collected, especially in rural areas.

53. **Mr. Castelli** (Argentina) said that benefits were adjusted twice a year in line with inflation, and non-contributory pensions had been established for persons with disabilities who were unable to work. Non-residents had access to free health care and education but were not entitled to disability benefits. The Government was concerned that children, including children with disabilities, in rural areas were not receiving universal child benefit. Consequently, under a programme established in 2016, a team travelled to remote communities to ensure that citizens were aware of their rights and had the necessary documentation to claim welfare benefits, including for disability.

The meeting was suspended at 11.35 a.m. and resumed at 11.55 a.m.

54. **Ms. Dobniewsky** (Argentina), responding to questions about the juvenile criminal justice system, said that, prior to the drafting of the juvenile criminal justice bill, a survey had been carried out at the federal level to ascertain how the Convention was being applied throughout the country. The results of the survey showed that the justice systems of many provinces conformed to the Convention and provided for alternative measures to deprivation of liberty. However, there was some resistance to the application of those alternative measures in the juvenile criminal justice system. Consequently, the Government had decided that any future law in that regard should be accompanied by relevant policies and practical measures.

55. The juvenile criminal justice bill, which had been developed with the collaboration of UNICEF and representatives of provincial governments and was aimed at harmonizing existing good practices across provinces, provided for specialized courts, training for law enforcement and the judiciary on children's rights and restorative measures, and alternative conflict resolution measures, including mediation and restorative agreements. An interdisciplinary team, including a counsellor, would be assigned to each juvenile case to assist the courts and help the child to plan his or her future. With regard to sentencing, socio-educational sanctions were preferred to disciplinary measures and the detention of children was seen as a last resort, in accordance with international human rights standards. The Ministry of Justice was working with relevant experts to develop training programmes on juvenile criminal mediation and restorative justice for practitioners. Various ministries were cooperating to carry out a budgetary analysis, which would ensure the necessary resources for the implementation of the draft law.

56. The Ministry of Justice and the National Secretariat for Children, Adolescents and the Family were working jointly to address the issue of children who were incarcerated with their mothers. Among other things, efforts were being made to increase the use of home detention as an alternative to the imprisonment of pregnant women and mothers. Currently, a total of 36 children were incarcerated with their mothers; the two prisons concerned had paediatric teams, nurses and ambulances that were available at all times, and developmental, nutritional and educational support teams.

57. **Ms. Cardarelli** (Argentina) said that the Education Act explicitly referred to the need to provide for the education of children aged from 45 days to 4 years who were born or lived in prison with their mother through a range of services provided both within and outside prison establishments. Efforts were made to ensure that, to the extent possible, such children attended nursery schools outside the prison. The Ministry of Education, in collaboration with provincial education authorities and the prison service, had established intersectoral workshops to review the provision of education on an ongoing basis.

Guidelines for education in the context of imprisonment had been developed, which would help to achieve full educational inclusion.

58. **Ms. Dobniewsky** (Argentina), responding to the question about suicide in juvenile detention centres, said that a working group consisting of various stakeholders had been set up to develop relevant guidelines and protocols for prison staff. The Prison System Ombudsman, who investigated all cases of suicide in prisons, had recently begun working with juvenile detention centres and had made draft recommendations on suicide prevention, which would be implemented in due course.

59. Regarding the case of a Wichi girl who had been denied a non-punishable abortion, the National Institute to Combat Discrimination, Xenophobia and Racism had concluded that the inaction of the relevant authorities in that case amounted to discrimination. The Ombudsman had initiated legal action, which was ongoing.

60. A national programme was in place to provide assistance to victims of all kinds of sexual and domestic violence, including sexual crimes such as child pornography. The programme provided a hotline in Buenos Aires and a mobile team that attended to victims. In 2016 and 2017, a large number of the calls received by the hotline were from children. The National Trafficking Victims Rescue and Assistance Programme was present in all provinces and provided interdisciplinary teams that offered psychological, social, medical and legal assistance to victims. Law enforcement had received specialized training in attending to victims of trafficking, and a dedicated hotline had been set up for the reporting of such crimes.

61. **Ms. Cardarelli** (Argentina) said that the Ministry of Education and Sport had taken initiatives to improve access to education, and goals in that regard had been included in the National Plan on Human Rights. Those goals included guaranteeing equal access to primary and secondary education for all, free of charge. Steps were being taken to ensure full coverage of early childhood education, for children aged three to five years, by providing new classrooms, broadening teacher training, and equipping schools with technology. A particular focus was being placed on pre-primary school, since the completion of preschool education had proven to reduce the likelihood of school dropout later. Efforts were being made to improve primary-level education by increasing the duration of the school day, enhancing teacher training, and through the *Escuela Faro* (Flagship School) programme, which aimed to improve attainment in mathematics and languages. Under the programme, 1,500 primary and 1,500 secondary schools would be identified for assistance. At the secondary level, the *Secundaria* 2030 (Secondary Education 2030) programme had been developed for the restructuring of secondary education, including by setting goals for increasing enrolment, reducing repetition, and increasing retention rates by 2030. Significant challenges persisted in that regard, in particular for young people from vulnerable and disadvantaged backgrounds. An attendance programme was also in place to improve early detection of potential truancy, and to ensure coordination between schools, families and communities in order to provide the necessary psychological and academic support to prevent it.

62. A comprehensive national digital education plan had been adopted to bring education into the digital era and ensure that all students were provided with the skills they would need to flourish in the modern world. A variety of digital programmes were in place, which allowed for creative learning through access to technology. Under the comprehensive plan, some 10,000 teachers received information communication technology (ICT) training each year. Education on sexual and reproductive health was also being strengthened through a Ministry of Education and Sport plan to reduce unplanned early pregnancy, which was closely associated with school dropouts. The plan was being rolled out at the provincial level, in provinces that had been identified as in need of support owing to their rates of early pregnancy. Virtual courses on sexual and reproductive health were also being developed.

63. Regarding access to education for children with disabilities, funds were being allocated to adapting school infrastructure and increasing accessibility to improve the inclusivity of mainstream schools. A literacy plan had been developed at the federal level, with input from the provinces, to ensure that all children were able to read and write.

64. **Ms. Quinteros** (Argentina) said that the sale of weapons was closely monitored; the political, security and human rights situations in the country of destination were taken into account, and no weapons were sold in countries where minors were forcibly recruited into armed conflict. Regarding forced evictions of indigenous peoples, such procedures had been suspended in accordance with the law. In 2017, indigenous people had been moved from the Nahuel Huapi national park, which was a private estate, in a procedure that had not constituted a forced eviction. One disappearance was being investigated. Prior, free and informed consent was applied in all matters relating to indigenous communities and the use of land by transnational companies. Argentina was party to the Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 (No.169) of the International Labour Organization. A participatory council for indigenous peoples had been established.

65. Migration and refugee issues were addressed using a human rights-based approach, with a strong awareness of the positive contribution that migrants made to the Argentine economy. Particular efforts were made to regulate the status of migrants from Colombia and the Dominican Republic by granting them permanent residency. Regarding child migrants, any child with at least one Argentine parent had the right to permanent residency in Argentina. Measures had been in place since 2012 to provide lasting solutions for unaccompanied minors, which had been applied in the cases of children arriving in Argentina from Africa. With regard to Decree No. 70/2017, amending migration law, any migrant in conflict with the law could be deported. Special dispensation was applied when criminal offences were committed by migrants under the age of 13 years. Family reunification remained a priority. There were currently no children awaiting deportation. Lastly, with regard to the concerns raised on child labour an executive decree had been issued in 2016 prohibiting the worst forms of child labour, and in 2017, 10 agreements had been concluded with tobacco producers to prevent the employment of children in tobacco factories.

66. **Mr. Castelli** (Argentina) said that draft legislation concerning trafficking in children would be finalized once agreement had been reached on the definition of an "intermediary" who facilitated trafficking. Telephone hotlines for children operated at the provincial level, with financial support from the federal Government. Consideration was being given to the establishment of an alternative national telephone line. Decree No. 160 (2018) provided for the establishment of a national disability agency, which would be responsible for bringing together all services relating to persons with disabilities, to ensure accessibility of services. Regarding juvenile justice, the number of minors in custody or being brought before the courts had reduced over recent years. Procedures for bringing young people into detention were established at the provincial level. Young defendants had the support of their relatives, the children's ombudsman and a family lawyer. Lastly, efforts to reduce unplanned early pregnancy were particularly important, since pregnancy was the cause of 30 per cent of secondary school dropouts. Some 67 per cent of unemployed young people were teenage mothers. The Government was therefore doing its utmost to retain girls in secondary education, and to include young mothers in education, society and the economy.

67. **Mr. Cardona Llorens** asked how, and by whom, the decision was made that a child with disabilities should attend a special school, rather than being integrated into mainstream education.

68. **Ms. Cardarelli** (Argentina) said that every effort was made to include children with learning disabilities, physical disabilities and social difficulties into mainstream education, with an inclusive vision for the duration of schooling and a pathway for graduation to ensure that they left school with qualifications. All children attended mainstream preschool education, unless they had a particularly serious disability. Integration into mainstream primary and secondary schooling was decided at the provincial level, by interdisciplinary teams who looked into children's specific schooling needs on a case-by-case basis. The number of inclusive schools was increasing and the number of special needs schools was being reduced. All possible measures were being taken to maximize inclusive education.

69. **Mr. Pedernera Reyna** said that the Committee had asked a considerable number of questions to obtain the maximum amount of information and thus enable it to issue the most appropriate and effective recommendations. He thanked the delegation for the

information provided, and recalled that a 48-hour period would ensue, during which further information could be submitted.

70. Argentina had rich resources and a diverse culture, which were the source of great potential. The Committee continued to be concerned about the economic situation and urged the State party to ensure that any austerity measures would not have a negative impact on children. Efforts to establish the Children's Ombudsman were especially welcome; cooperation with parliament would help to expedite the process. Juvenile justice should be addressed as a matter of urgency. The Committee's detailed recommendations would be communicated to the State party in due course. The Government was encouraged to use them as a roadmap to navigate the challenges related to the rights of children and adolescents, and to disseminate them broadly, in particular among children and young people, in accessible language, including the languages of the indigenous peoples.

71. **Mr. Castelli** (Argentina) said he wished to thank the Committee for its questions, which had been motivated by the best of intentions. The reporting procedure had helped the Government to review its efforts to implement the Committee's previous recommendations and to consider how to proceed with the implementation of those that remained pending. The economic situation was indeed of concern, in particular since those most severely affected tended to be those who already lived in poverty or situations of vulnerability. The utmost efforts would be made to reduce inflation, increase employment and stabilize the economy. His Government was committed to furthering all initiatives related to promoting the rights of the child, focusing on change for those who were most vulnerable, to break the cycle of poverty. Although much remained to be done to ensure that no child was left behind, the Government was determined and committed to implementing the Committee's recommendations as swiftly and effectively as possible.

The meeting rose at 1.00 p.m.

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Summary record of the 2286th meeting
Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Tuesday, 15 May 2018, at 3 p.m.

Chair: Ms. Winter

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The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

Consideration of reports of States parties (*continued*)

Combined fifth to seventh periodic reports of Angola (CRC/C/AGO/5-7; CRC/C/AGO/Q/5-7 and CRC/C/AGO/Q/5-7/Add.1)

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of Angola took places at the Committee table.*

2. **Ms. Mixinge** (Angola), introducing her country's report (CRC/C/AGO/5-7), said that the 2010 Constitution underpinned the fundamental rights of citizens, particularly children, and enshrined the general principles contained in the Convention such as equality and non-discrimination. It was also the basis for peace and democracy. Under the Constitution, in fact, elections had been held in 2012 and 2017. Since the sale of oil was the main source of national income, the country had seen a fall in revenues since 2014, which had affected the implementation of a number of social policies. Nonetheless, the new Government remained committed to protecting the human rights of all citizens, particularly the most vulnerable such as children, and continued its efforts to engage in dialogue with civil society, fight corruption and eradicate poverty. Services for children, such as birth registration, health care, education and access to clean drinking water, had separate funding lines within the General State Budget and, despite the reduction in resources, funding for the protection of children's rights had actually increased since 2014.

3. The report under review detailed the measures that had been introduced since the Committee had last issued concluding observations in respect of Angola, in 2010. It had been drafted by the Intersectoral Commission for the Preparation of National Reports on Human Rights, which brought together core national institutions for the protection and promotion of human rights. The drafting process had also involved extensive consultation with civil society groups and United Nations agencies.

4. A number of laws with a bearing on children's rights had been passed since 2010. They included the Domestic Violence Act (Act No. 25/11), the Act on the Protection and Development of the Child (Act No. 25/12) and the Money Laundering Act (Act No. 3/14), which included provisions to protect women and children from human trafficking. In addition, Presidential Decree 235/14 had been issued providing for an interministerial commission to promote the social reintegration of trafficking victims. There had also been several developments on the institutional front. For example, the National Council for Children and the National Council for Persons with Disabilities had been merged to form the National Council for Social Action, which was responsible for promoting and protecting the rights of vulnerable groups such as children and older persons. The Ministry of Justice had become the Ministry of Justice and Human Rights and had been mandated to formulate and monitor human rights policies at the national level. Finally, a new ministry, the Ministry for Social Action, the Family and the Advancement of Women, had been formed by the merger of two existing ministries; it was responsible for drafting and implementing social policies to combat poverty and promote child welfare.

5. According to the Family Code, the minimum legal age for marriage was 18 although, under certain circumstances and with the consent of parents, guardians or the courts, boys could marry at 16 and girls at 15. As a participant in the African Union Campaign to End Child Marriage, Angola was currently contemplating amendments to the Family Code and, in particular, reviewing the provisions related to marriageable age and how they were applied in customary law. The rights of children with disabilities were reflected in various pieces of specific legislation, including the Persons with Disabilities Act (Act No. 21/12), the Accessibility Act (Act No. 10/16) and Presidential Decree 207/14 on social intervention strategies for the inclusion of children with disabilities. Opportunities were made available for all children to make their voices heard with regard to policies, programmes and laws that affected them, and they were involved in the implementation of the 11 Commitments for Children.

6. The Government had taken steps to ensure that every child born in Angola was duly registered. To that end, it had increased the number of birth registration offices across the country, which now included 92 offices located directly inside hospital maternity wards.

Training on birth registration had been provided to hospital personnel such as technical and administrative staff, and midwives. In addition, campaigns to raise public awareness about the importance of birth registration had been carried out, particularly in remote areas, and legislation had been introduced waiving registration fees. Thanks to those efforts, more than 6 million persons had been registered.

7. In line with the constitutional provision that recognized the family as one of the fundamental pillars of society, the National Council of the Family had set up counselling centres throughout the country. Acts of violence against children were prohibited by law and combated through the National Strategy to Prevent and Fight Violence against Children. In the period 2015–2017, the National Institute of the Child had registered 239 abandoned children, all of whom had been accommodated, either within their own extended family, in foster families or in children's homes. At the national level, homes for children separated from their families housed a total of 6,712 minors. Adoption was regulated under the Family Code, and the Government had launched the process for acceding to the 1993 Hague Convention on Protection of Children and Cooperation in respect of Intercountry Adoption.

8. Considerable advances had been made in the field of health care. Neonatal and infant mortality rates had fallen sharply since 2000, and average life expectancy had increased from 48 years in 2009 to 60 in 2014. Those outcomes had been possible thanks to a public health service that included 3,034 facilities, from clinics to hospitals and from dispensaries to rehabilitation centres. In addition, extra funds for primary care had been allocated to municipalities, while integrated maternal and child health services, covering such areas as family planning, prenatal consultations, vaccinations, postnatal care and monitoring, and infant nutrition, had been put in place. The training of doctors had been upgraded and specialists were now available for consultation throughout the country. Early pregnancies had fallen, and the authorities were currently cooperating with national and international stakeholders to develop a strategy for the health of adolescents and young people. Nonetheless, and despite the fact that in 2015 Angola had been declared polio-free, certain challenges remained such as universal vaccination coverage and the continuing prevalence of moderate anaemia and chronic malnutrition.

9. In 2016, legislation had been enacted aimed at increasing the duration of free compulsory education to nine years from the current six. At the same time, the Government was developing a strategy to reduce school dropout rates, particularly among girls, and to eradicate illiteracy entirely by 2022. A 2015 education survey had led to the development of a national plan for the schooling of children from nomadic communities and ethnic minorities. Such children were also served by special programmes developed by the authorities in partnership with churches and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The National Special Education Policy for Inclusive Schooling catered for the educational requirements of nearly 27,000 children with disabilities, and there were 775 inclusive schools and 20 special schools, whose catchment areas covered 16 of the country's 18 provinces.

10. Statistics showed that the total number of children attending school had risen from 5.7 million in 2008 to 8.4 million in 2016 and that literacy rates among persons aged between 15 and 24 had climbed from 76 per cent in 2008 to 85.6 per cent in 2016. All school curricula included modules on human rights. The National Strategy for Education in Human Rights had been drawn up and was currently being examined by the Council of Ministers. Children born in Angola to persons with refugee status were entitled to access to public education on an equal footing with citizens.

11. The Government attached great importance to social development in general and remained committed to the comprehensive protection of children's rights. The minimum working age was 14, but children of that age who wished to work required the approval of their parents or guardians and could only be employed in the context of apprenticeships or training contracts. In line with the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Administration of Juvenile Justice, special mechanisms for minors in conflict with the law had been set up within the country's 19 provincial courts. Appropriate support was provided for infants who resided in prison with their detained mothers. In addition, the authorities acted to, among other things, prevent violence against children at school, in the

family and in the community; encourage and support the development of preschool education; improve complaint systems; and expand recreational infrastructure.

12. The goals of the country's long-term development plan, Angola 2025, were gradually being achieved through the National Development Plans for 2013–2017 and 2018–2022. The main focus was to accelerate economic diversification with a view to safeguarding the rights of the most vulnerable citizens, particularly children. Angola was a party or a signatory to most of the international human rights treaties and enjoyed excellent relations with the treaty bodies and special procedures mechanisms. In December 2017, it had presented its initial report on the implementation of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child.

13. **Ms. Ayoubi Idrissi** (Coordinator, Country Task Force) said that the Committee recognized and appreciated the efforts made by the State party and the economic difficulties it was currently facing, which had arisen following a period of robust growth.

14. She wished to know if the Convention had ever been invoked before the courts, particularly in the light of the fact that, under the Constitution, international treaties took precedence over national laws in the domestic legal order. She remained concerned that the Act on the Protection and Development of the Child did not adequately cover such aspects as corporal punishment, child marriage and child labour, and she hoped that the delegation could inform the Committee of any initiatives to reform that Act and bring it into line with the Convention.

15. Notwithstanding the numerous plans and strategies mentioned in the State party's report, there did not appear to be any overarching strategy for the realization of the rights of the child. Given that, according to paragraph 17 of the report, the National Development Plan for 2013–2017 was "a fundamental factor for achieving human rights in general and the rights of the child in particular", she would welcome information on how children's rights were addressed in the plan or, as it had already expired, in any follow-up plan.

16. She wondered if the replacement of the National Council for Children by the National Council for Social Action might not affect the public perception of children's rights. Had the change lowered the profile of children's rights or had any impact on the coordination of action to implement the Convention?

17. She would appreciate details of the size and impact on children of the increase in expenditure mentioned by the head of delegation. In particular, she would like to know what steps were taken to allocate resources for children on the basis of vulnerability rather than number of children. Clearly, a small number of children in a given location might be more vulnerable and in greater need of assistance than a larger number of less vulnerable children elsewhere.

18. Corruption came at a cost to the State and thus affected all parts of society, including children. She wished to know what, precisely, was being done to combat corruption and, in particular, how many cases had reached the courts and what the outcome had been.

19. Neither the State party's report nor its written replies to the list of issues (CRC/C/AGO/Q/5-7/Add.1) contained any information on data collection. What steps was the State party taking to collect disaggregated data in all areas related to children's rights?

20. With regard to the lack of an independent monitoring mechanism, she would like to know if any progress had been made towards establishing a national human rights institution. Given that the Ombudsman could receive complaints submitted by children and complaints concerning children's rights, she wondered if children throughout the country enjoyed guaranteed access to the Ombudsman in full confidentiality.

21. She would appreciate receiving information on practical action taken to disseminate the Convention and the impact of such action on the promotion and protection of children's rights, including those of specific groups of children such as children with disabilities or those deprived of their liberty. Had teachers, judicial officers and others working with or for children received any specific training on the Convention?

22. Civil society participation was considered to be very important in the promotion and protection of human rights. How had civil society been involved in the preparation of the

State party's report and what was being done to make it easier for associations active in the field of economic, social and cultural rights to do their work freely?

23. In view of the strong presence of the oil and extractive industries in Angola, she wondered if the business sector was involved at all in the promotion and protection of children's rights, and if there were safeguards in place to prevent businesses from violating children's rights, for example for the purposes of economic exploitation. She would also like to know what was being done to safeguard the right of children to a healthy environment and to ensure that indigenous people had access to their lands.

24. The Committee had received reports that freedom of expression was limited in the State party. For example, at a protest by teachers and students at a teacher training college in Caluquembe, in April–May 2018, against the imposition of extra school fees of about US$ 30 a month, police had fired on protesters, wounding two of them. What was being done to resolve that dispute and ensure that any wrongdoing was punished?

25. With regard to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, there was a reference in paragraph 61 of the State party's report to "a commission that is working on analysing the religious phenomenon and the harmful practices of some religious sects and groups". She would be interested to learn what the outcome of the commission's analysis had been and what action had been taken to prevent such harmful practices from affecting children.

26. **Ms. Todorova** (Country Task Force) said that she would be interested to hear the rationale for having lower ages of majority in different pieces of national legislation. The lower minimum age for marriage set for girls amounted to gender discrimination; it was not clear whether the current review of the Family Code was looking into that issue. Moreover, it was reported that girls entered into de facto marriages even before they reached the age of 15. She wondered if there was any chance that the parental power to decide on early marriage would be abolished and the decision left to the courts. How feasible would it be for Angola to fix the minimum age for marriage at 18 for both girls and boys?

27. She would like to know if Angola had ratified the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, which it had signed in 2013, and, if not, when it expected to do so. She would appreciate further information on the practical measures taken to prevent gender discrimination against girls in the family, at school and in access to justice and to change society's perception of gender roles and cultural stereotypes, as well as on measures taken to achieve sustainable equality for children in vulnerable situations, such as children with disabilities, children with HIV/AIDS, street children, San children and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex children. She would be interested to learn more about any cultural practices that discriminated against children, in the field of inheritance for example.

28. She wished to commend the State party on establishing a legal basis for the application of the best interests of the child in family disputes that reached the courts. However, she was concerned about reports of long delays in the processing of such cases and would like to know what was being done to minimize those delays. The principle of the best interests of the child was not limited to such cases: it also applied to decisions in the areas of care, health, education, social protection, leisure, protection from violence and exploitation, and criminal justice. She therefore wished to hear whether guidelines were offered to teachers, doctors, social workers and anyone else working with children to help them determine the best interests of the child in a given situation.

29. The Committee agreed with the State party that the promotion of a culture of respect for the opinion of children was a complex task, but it also believed that the effective participation of children in decisions that affected them required safeguards to ensure that the child's views were accorded due weight, in accordance with the child's age and maturity. People who worked with children also needed training on how to help children express their views and how to prepare adults to listen to those views. The Committee would appreciate information on any steps taken to provide such safeguards and training. While the State party was to be commended on its established practice of listening to children caught up in family disputes before the courts, she wondered what happened when children's participation in school affairs or family matters came up against traditional attitudes that were at odds with such participation. Having heard that the National

Children's Forum had not been active recently, she would like to know how often the provincial and national assemblies of children took place, and which authority was responsible for organizing and following up on them.

30. According to the information made available to the Committee, the identity rights of Angolan children were in need of further legal safeguards. A child's access to a legal identity was a fundamental right. Failure to register and document a child's existence prevented the child's enjoyment of a wide range of human rights. The Committee therefore welcomed the Government's prioritization of mass registration campaigns to clear the backlog of unregistered children and its commitment to achieving universal registration. At the same time, it was concerned that the actual registration rate remained low, with only one in four children born during the mass registration period, and only one in two children aged between 5 and 14, having been registered. The Committee wished to know what strategy the State party had for achieving universal registration. Did it intend to link registration to vaccination campaigns or school enrolment, for example, or to invest in decentralized offices or mobile units? While she welcomed the move to do away with fees for birth certificates and identity documents, she would like to know if there were plans to issue birth certificates immediately after registration. Immediate registration after birth was clearly linked to the child's right to a name. The Committee was concerned about the persistent practice of giving a child a name chosen by consensus of the members of the child's extended family, which could take years. What measures were being taken to change that practice?

31. She would appreciate information on any developments regarding the decision to suspend the issuance of birth certificates to children born to foreigners, including the children of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, until a new nationality law had been adopted. Birth registration was essential to protect such children from statelessness. In that connection, she wished to know if there were legal avenues available to provide nationality to foreign children born in Angola who could not take the nationality of their parents. She would also like to hear what the procedure was for establishing the paternity of a child born to a single mother, and whether children who had been abandoned by their parents and family had access to information on their birth family.

32. The Committee welcomed the adoption of the Domestic Violence Act and the strategy and related plan to combat violence against children. However, corporal punishment was still not effectively prohibited in schools, day-care facilities, alternative care settings or penal institutions. The Committee was concerned that the concept of "justifiable correction" offered a legal defence for parents using corporal punishment to discipline their children. She wished to stress that the express prohibition of corporal punishment in all settings, and particularly in the home, was clear recognition of the child as a holder of rights. It would be interesting to learn how the Government intended to address societal issues raised by such a prohibition.

33. She would like to know more about the Government's measures for the prevention and early identification of neglect and sexual abuse of children in the family; data on the number of such cases prosecuted and abusers punished would be particularly helpful. She also wished to know how violence in closed settings such as care institutions was reported and investigated, whether teachers and doctors were trained to spot the signs of violence and sexual abuse, whether there were any specific measures to protect street children from violence, and what rehabilitation and reintegration services were available to victims. Details of the Government's experience in preventing violence through its various networks for the promotion and protection of the rights of the child would be welcome.

34. With regard to strengthening parenting skills, the Committee would appreciate more information on the mandate of the family counselling centres set up in each province and would like to know if those centres coordinated their work with the provincial units of the National Institute of the Child.

The meeting was suspended at 4.10 p.m. and resumed at 4.30 p.m.

35. **Ms. Mixinge** (Angola), by way of an introduction to her delegation's replies to the questions raised by Committee members, said that the purpose of establishing the 11 Commitments for Children had been to ensure that children's rights were respected and to

engage all stakeholders in efforts to provide a consistent and sustainable response to the challenges faced in the realization of those rights.

36. The Government, working with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), churches, schools and communities, had disseminated the Convention widely, so that all citizens were now familiar with the principle of the best interests of the child. The various bodies responsible for implementing the 11 Commitments also took part in activities to disseminate and explain the Convention. As noted by Ms. Todorova, Angola had a system of networks for the promotion and protection of children's rights, which operated at the national, provincial, municipal and community levels. Those networks were active in identifying local problems and publicizing government policies on children.

37. All forms of child abuse were punishable by law in Angola and were considered socially unacceptable. Support, including psychosocial support, was provided for children whose rights had been violated or who had been abused. Where necessary, support was also provided for the victim's family.

38. With regard to the National Council for Social Action, "social action" was clearly a broad field. It had been decided, in the interests of efficiency and in order to make the best use of financial and human resources, to establish a single council to address the needs of a range of groups in need of special attention, such as women, older persons or persons with disabilities. Provincial-level meetings were held to monitor implementation of the rights of the child. Children held their own meetings for the same purpose and even conducted their own assessments of the implementation of the 11 Commitments by the competent State bodies.

39. **Mr. Malovoloneke** (Angola) said that the Government sought to create an inclusive society in which all Angolans were represented. To that end, it encouraged citizens, particularly children, to participate in the media. A training course would be held at the end of 2018 for children involved in producing media content, and all of the country's 27 national radio stations broadcast a 30-minute programme produced by children, for children.

40. The Ministry of Social Communication had collaborated with UNICEF on the establishment of a plan to raise awareness among media professionals of the rights of the child, including the right to privacy, and of standards for reporting on sensitive stories involving children. Journalists who infringed children's rights, for example, by failing to protect their identity, faced punishment under the law.

41. Social marketing campaigns aimed at children had been used to advertise immunization programmes. The strategy had been instrumental in the eradication of polio in the country, and similar campaigns had been launched to fight malaria and cholera.

42. **Ms. Izata** (Angola) said that a series of events, including elections, had delayed ratification of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. Ratification was expected before the end of 2019.

43. **Ms. Januário** (Angola) said that the provisions of international treaties could be directly invoked in any court. A series of rulings and decisions had been handed down in juvenile and family courts on the basis of provisions of the Convention, notably article 3, on the best interests of the child.

44. Birth registration was now free of charge for people of all ages, whereas before it had been free of charge only for children under 5. Campaigns had been conducted to encourage birth registration. The number of registration offices across the country would continue to be increased and the related procedures rendered less bureaucratic. Since not all babies were born in maternity wards, over 1,000 traditional midwives in remote communities had been trained to record births in ledgers issued to them; the entries were then transcribed into the official register. The problems posed by the practice of consulting the extended family before deciding on a child's name, which could delay or impede birth registration, were being tackled through an awareness-raising campaign. When mothers were registered as the sole parent of a child, the birth registration office conducted an investigation to establish paternity. Changes could be made to the register entry at any time by means of a court order.

45. The right of foreign citizens to receive birth certificates was guaranteed; however, registration did not confer Angolan nationality. Approximately 500 children of foreign nationals had been registered in the country. A law on nationality, enacted in 2016, provided Angolan nationality to children who were stateless or at risk of statelessness, and a 2017 law streamlined the administrative procedure through which refugees could obtain Angolan nationality.

46. The country was a party to various international conventions on combating corruption, and the issue was a priority for the Government. Measures taken thus far included the introduction of requirements for greater transparency in the banking sector, the establishment of a special investigation unit under the Attorney General and the creation of a new unit in the National Criminal Investigation Directorate. A number of corruption cases involving high-ranking officials were under investigation.

47. **Mr. Madi** asked how birth certificates issued by the authorities reached infants whose births had been recorded by midwives.

48. **Ms. Januário** (Angola) said that, in such cases, the certificate was sent to the mother.

49. **Ms. Skelton** asked whether it would be feasible to have birth registration offices at clinics where babies received postnatal care, such as immunizations, in order to give families time to decide on a name.

50. **Ms. Januário** (Angola) said that registration services were already available in clinics. Midwives registered births only in areas where no such services existed.

51. Law enforcement officers, members of the judiciary, health-care and social workers received training on the Convention. Awareness of the Convention and children's rights in general was raised through government-issued pamphlets and media campaigns. The Ombudsman received verbal or written complaints and had offices in five provinces. Mechanisms for settling disputes involving children were in place as an alternative to the court system.

52. The legal age of majority in Angola was 18. Exceptions in the Family Code that allowed marriage below that age, for example, were under review. Although campaigns were under way to combat both early marriage and pregnancy, those phenomena were rooted in cultural beliefs that were, to some extent, beyond the control of the State.

53. The age of criminal responsibility, as set out in the Criminal Code, was 16. The parliament had debated whether to change the age and a bill on the subject was expected in the near future. Employment law complied with the relevant International Labour Organization (ILO) conventions. The minimum age of employment was 14, but, in practice, few children sought to work at that age.

54. The Intersectoral Commission for the Preparation of National Reports on Human Rights allowed NGO representatives to participate in its meetings and invited them to take part in the drafting of reports. Over the previous two years, the number of NGOs had increased by 300. They went about their business freely and there were no obstacles to cooperation with them. In July 2017, the Constitutional Court had ruled that Presidential Decree 74/15, which imposed restrictions on civil society groups, violated the Constitution. The decree was therefore no longer in force.

55. **Ms. Mixinge** (Angola) said that the Government had established the Indicator System of the Angolan Child in order to capture progress towards the 11 Commitments for Children. It was currently analysing the forms of deprivation that affected children, in collaboration with the National Statistics Institute and UNICEF.

56. The new National Development Plan, which covered the period 2018–2022, included actions and activities in various sectors, to be implemented by actors at all levels of the State. An innovation was the incorporation of the Sustainable Development Goals into the Plan.

57. Vocational training programmes had been established for vulnerable children, including orphans and abandoned children. The Ministry of Public Administration,

Employment and Social Security was working with churches and other partners to provide targeted training to facilitate the entry of young people into the labour market. Those without job opportunities were encouraged to set up their own sustainable micro-businesses.

58. Increased decentralization would help to improve the situation of children by ensuring that the provision of health care and social services was organized by local government. The Government had committed to developing child-friendly schools and municipalities; that would enhance the promotion and protection of children's rights.

59. As Angola was a secular State, all religious institutions had to comply with national legislation. Compliance was monitored by the Ministry of Culture.

60. **Ms. Ayoubi Idrissi** said that a systematized data-collection system was essential in order for UNICEF to analyse effectively the situation with respect to children's rights. Had the Government established, or discussed establishing, a national data-collection mechanism that would systematically gather and disaggregate data in all areas related to the rights of the child?

61. Regarding freedom of worship and religion, she wished to know how the case of the sect leader in Huambo, referred to in paragraph 61 of the State party's report, had been followed up and what the findings of the commission established to investigate the harmful practices of some religious sects had been.

62. **Ms. Mixinge** (Angola) said that her delegation would revert to some of the questions raised by Committee members at the following meeting. She wished to emphasize that urban and rural children were treated equally in Angola in line with national legislation. The child protection system involved actors from all sectors. Any children who considered their rights to have been violated, or who had been subjected to violence, could lodge a complaint with the police or the National Institute of the Child, which had monitoring and dispute settlement units. Once lodged, complaints were referred to specialized services.

63. **Ms. Todorova** said that she would appreciate further information about the mandate of family counselling centres. Did those centres coordinate with the provincial units of the National Institute of the Child? How many units and centres were there nationwide? What kind of professionals did they employ and how many? Given that the provincial units had forums for receiving complaints and claims from children regarding disputes with their parents, it would be helpful to know what the major areas of contention were and whether there were complaints of corporal punishment or other violence at home.

64. The State party had provided statistics in its report about the number of families it assisted. She wished to know how "assistance" was defined, what kinds of assistance were provided, whether the assistance available had been adjusted to reflect the growing child population and increasing urbanization, and if there were specific measures for single or young mothers. She would also like to know whether the gaps in the legislation on child maintenance had been brought to the attention of the Commission for Judicial and Legal Reform. Information on the prevalence of polygamy and of wife inheritance, whereby a man married his brother's widow, as well as on the impact of those practices on children, would also be welcome.

65. In view of the already high rates of parental negligence and parental abandonment, she wondered how the recent increase in the fertility rate had affected the separation of children from their parents and whether there were policies to address the underlying economic causes of separation. Had policies been adopted, for example, to promote employment for parents? In addition, she would appreciate clarification from the delegation of reports that the Committee had received concerning the impoverishment and internal displacement of many families as a result of eviction from their homes. Were those reports true?

66. She wished to know whether the Government collected data systematically on children deprived of the care of their biological parents owing to death of the parents, abandonment by the parents or removal of the children from the parents. What options were open to children temporarily or permanently deprived of parental care? How many children were cared for by their extended families, for example, and did legislation provide for the

appointment of guardians for children? She wondered if there was a systematic policy on alternative care, whether there were national standards on the quality of such care and who was responsible for monitoring quality. She would also like to know what procedure was followed when children were removed from their parents, and who was responsible for authorizing removal and determining whether it was in the child's best interests. The delegation should also explain why the Government had invested in institutional care rather than foster care, as had been recommended in the Committee's previous concluding observations (CRC/C/AGO/CO/2-4).

67. She wished to know whether there were data on the number of children available for adoption, legal criteria to establish whether a child could be adopted or a list of children available for adoption. Was there demand for adoption or any policy encouraging it? When would the State party accede to the 1993 Hague Convention on Protection of Children and Cooperation in respect of Intercountry Adoption?

68. Lastly, she wondered how many children had been separated from a parent owing to the parent's imprisonment. Were there measures to ensure regular contact between imprisoned parents and their children? How many young children remained with their mothers in prison and how did the Government guarantee the rights to education and leisure of such children?

69. **Mr. Rodríguez Reyes** (Country Task Force) said that he would appreciate information on the implementation of policies related to children with disabilities, specifically what had changed or improved. He wondered whether the Government collected data disaggregated by disability to help it design public policies tailored to specific disabilities. He would also like to know whether the existing programmes and policies covered children with disabilities nationwide, and whether the Government disseminated or provided training on the content of legislation related to children with disabilities. He would welcome figures on the number of children with disabilities who were in school. He would also be interested to hear about any policies to promote the social inclusion of children with disabilities in areas besides education. Were there policies to improve the accessibility of public transport, for example?

70. Regarding education, he wished to know what steps were being taken to increase school enrolment in rural areas and reduce dropout rates. Given the important role played by teachers in tackling school abandonment, he wondered what was being done to improve staff retention in rural schools.

71. In view of the State party's high rates of infant and maternal mortality and the link with poverty and poor nutrition, he would like to learn more about midwife training and the infant health programme implemented as part of the National Development Plan for 2013–2017. He also wished to know how the Government planned to ensure universal vaccination coverage and what measures were being taken to address the high rates of malaria in some areas.

72. He wondered what programmes or measures were in place to strengthen reproductive health care for adolescents, promote responsible parenting and facilitate access to contraceptives. He would be interested to hear whether the Government had considered revising the Criminal Code to decriminalize abortion, and how it would ensure that adolescents had access to safe abortions and post-abortion care. He would also like to know whether specific resources would be allocated, in the context of the national strategy to promote adolescent health, to inform adolescents about HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases, and how the strategy would be implemented in the short term. Regarding HIV, the State party should explain what was being done to ensure full access to antiretroviral treatment for people who needed it and to support pregnant women who had contracted HIV. Had the Government requested technical assistance from the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) or UNICEF in that regard?

73. He would appreciate information on any measures to prevent drug use and any steps being taken to prohibit tobacco and alcohol advertising in the media. In addition, he wished to know what public policies were in place regarding children and adolescents who required mental health care. Did the Government prioritize hospitalization, medication or the

prevention of mental health problems? Were psychologists available to provide care to children in schools or communities?

74. He would like to know more about the Government's malnutrition strategy, particularly whether it was applied nationwide and whether it prioritized the nutrition of breastfeeding mothers and their children. He also wondered how the Government promoted early breastfeeding and how many Angolan hospitals were certified under the UNICEF baby-friendly hospital initiative. He would welcome information on the amount of maternity leave granted to women and compliance with the ILO Maternity Protection Convention, 2000 (No. 183).

75. **Ms. Ayoubi Idrissi** said that, although the Government had established a list of dangerous jobs, work in diamond mines was not explicitly prohibited for children, and although a labour inspectorate had been established, it was unable to fully address problems related to child labour in rural areas. What was being done to combat the economic exploitation of children, particularly their engagement in dangerous work, and how did the Government intend to strengthen the role of the labour inspectorate?

76. She was concerned to note that young people in conflict with the law were often deprived of their liberty and were held alongside adults in the country's two reintegration centres, which, moreover, were insufficiently resourced to meet the needs of children re-entering society. She wished to know what measures had been taken to improve the juvenile justice system, establish the use of deprivation of liberty as a last resort, promote non-custodial alternatives and rehabilitation, and increase the age of criminal responsibility from 16 to 18.

77. Despite institutional and legislative efforts to counter people smuggling and human trafficking, trafficking remained a problem, with South Africa, Namibia and Europe the main destinations. Trafficking within Angola also persisted and was rarely prosecuted owing to corruption. What measures was the Government taking to tackle the trafficking and smuggling of children, and ensure that cases were prosecuted? She would particularly appreciate information on extraterritorial jurisdiction, mutual legal assistance and rehabilitation mechanisms for victims.

78. **Ms. Aho Assouma** said that she wished to know what measures were in place to combat harmful traditional practices related to witchcraft and what provisions were contained in the Family Code in that regard. What was being done to protect children declared to be witches, who could be ill-treated, abused or even murdered?

79. She wondered how the Government prevented mother-to-child transmission of HIV and whether such measures were implemented nationwide. Information on relevant health-care training programmes in rural areas would be appreciated. She understood that some parts of the population drank water from wells and rivers. She would therefore welcome information about efforts to increase access to clean drinking water and reduce the risk of cholera. In view of the droughts and floods in the State party, she would like to know whether the Government had long-term plans to combat climate change.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.

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Seventy-eighth session

Summary record of the 2287th meeting
Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Wednesday, 16 May 2018, at 10 a.m.

Chair: Ms. Winter

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Consideration of reports of States parties (*continued*)

Combined fifth to seventh periodic reports of Angola (*continued*) (CRC/C/AGO/5-7; CRC/C/AGO/Q/5-7 and CRC/C/AGO/Q/5-7/Add.1)

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of Angola took places at the Committee table.*

2. **Ms. Mixinge** (Angola), resuming her delegation's replies to the questions raised at the previous meeting, said that measures were being taken under the National Development Plan for 2018–2022 to stimulate local development and promote the welfare of families, especially children. Data were collected at the communal, municipal, provincial and national levels, under the oversight of the National Statistics Institute. Social services were being progressively decentralized. Integrated social assistance centres had been established in three provinces, as a pilot project, and a cash transfer scheme aimed at vulnerable families had been set up.

3. In order to boost school enrolment, the Government aimed to build 5,000 new classrooms and recruit an additional 20,000 teachers over the next two years. It planned to increase its investment in child-centred projects from US$ 3.1 billion in 2017 to US$ 3.5 billion in 2018. Various measures had been taken to protect the population from natural disasters: a national contingency plan had been drawn up, a national committee on civil protection had been established and legislation on a strategic food reserve had been adopted.

4. The "Water for All" programme was being implemented to increase access to clean drinking water, and measures were being taken in various municipalities to rehouse families living in unsafe conditions. Nine baby-friendly hospitals had been established, in collaboration with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). Awareness-raising on the benefits of breastfeeding was being carried out and steps were being taken to better regulate the marketing of breast-milk substitutes.

5. Harmful traditional practices were prohibited as soon as they were identified. In order to combat such practices, awareness-raising was conducted among traditional leaders and in communities, with a particular focus on girls' empowerment. A programme for the social reintegration of children who had been accused of witchcraft was under way.

6. Although children could be employed as apprentices or trainees, they were prohibited from engaging in certain occupations, such as mining. Employers who recruited children to work in those fields were prosecuted. Training on labour legislation had recently been provided for labour inspectors.

7. **Mr. Fernandes de Carvalho** (Angola) said that maternal and infant mortality rates had fallen thanks to the decentralization of primary health care and the introduction of the comprehensive package of health measures aimed at mothers and children. As part of the Comprehensive Immunization Programme, vaccination campaigns had been organized throughout the country and vaccination booklets had been issued. A new campaign had been launched in April 2018 with the aim of vaccinating a further 3 million children. In order to combat malaria, the Government had distributed long-lasting insecticide-treated nets and had launched cooperation projects with neighbouring countries and fellow members of the Southern African Development Community (SADC).

8. Various national plans had been adopted to promote sexual and reproductive health among adolescents. Under an agreement with the World Bank, the Government was set to receive funding of US$ 110 million, which was to be invested in health services for women and girls of reproductive age and children under 5 years old. The funding would be used to equip 300 primary health-care centres in seven provinces.

9. An integrated mental health system had been set up in six provinces. Numerous measures had been taken to combat HIV/AIDS, as outlined in paragraphs 64 and 65 of his country's replies to the list of issues (CRC/C/AGO/Q/5-7/Add.1). Around 20,000 children aged 14 years and under were living with HIV/AIDS. Treatment was being provided to 14 per cent of those children, as well as to around 7,000 women with HIV/AIDS. The

Government was fully committed to cooperating with the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) and to pursuing the 90-90-90 target; the Executive Director of UNAIDS had visited Angola in 2013.

10. **Ms. Aho Assouma** said that it was unclear how the health services described by the delegation were provided in rural areas, where there was a lack of trained personnel. She would appreciate information on the recent outbreak of yellow fever. She also wondered how many mosquito nets had been distributed and what steps were taken to ensure that they were used for their intended purpose. It would be interesting to hear what initiatives had been taken in connection with the African Union Campaign on Accelerated Reduction of Maternal, Newborn and Child Mortality in Africa and how blood bags were made available for use during caesarean deliveries. Lastly, she wished to know how much of the national budget was allocated to the health sector and whether vaccines were purchased using the State budget or with financial assistance from international partners.

11. **Mr. Fernandes de Carvalho** (Angola) said that there had been an outbreak of yellow fever in September 2015. A total of 844 persons had been infected, including 46 children under 4 years old and 183 children between 5 and 14 years old. Over 18 million people had received yellow fever vaccinations as part of a mass immunization campaign. No further cases of the disease had been reported since December 2016.

12. Awareness-raising on the correct use of mosquito nets had been carried out. A national blood bank had been set up and medical staff had received training on the distribution and use of blood supplies. Initiatives had been organized to encourage people to donate blood.

13. Health spending currently accounted for 6 per cent of the national budget. The Government was working hard to reach the target of 15 per cent that had been established in the Ouagadougou Declaration on Primary Health Care and Health Systems in Africa. Additional funding was provided by international partners such as the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization (GAVI). Over 90 per cent of spending on vaccines was financed from the State budget; the remaining costs were covered by international partners.

14. **Ms. Mixinge** (Angola) said that the number of voluntary blood donors had increased and that blood donors' associations were being set up.

15. **Mr. Rodríguez Reyes** said that he would like to know whether public health policies covered the whole of the national territory, including rural areas. With regard to breastfeeding, it would be helpful to hear more about the State party's implementation of the UNICEF baby-friendly hospital initiative. He would also like to know whether the Government intended to extend maternity leave from 12 to 14 weeks, in line with the International Labour Organization (ILO) Maternity Protection Convention, 2000 (No. 183). The delegation should provide information on any public policies regarding mental health.

16. **Ms. Mixinge** (Angola) said that, while the vaccination programme covered the whole country, campaigns were conducted on a regional basis. Urban and rural populations benefited from the same level of vaccination coverage. The armed forces and civil society assisted the Government in reaching the most remote areas.

17. The Government was implementing a baby-friendly municipality initiative with the aim of making schools, hospitals and police stations more baby-friendly; the Ministry of Health worked in close collaboration with UNICEF. More than 80 per cent of infants were breastfed, and the Government had signed an agreement with Brazil to establish a human milk bank in Luanda. It was hoped that such banks could subsequently be established elsewhere in the country.

18. **Mr. Malovoloneke** (Angola) said that the President had established an interministerial subcommission on communication and social mobilization for health. Such efforts were spearheaded by the Government, which produced advertising materials for television and radio broadcast and, with the support of international partners such as UNICEF and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), trained civil society activists to promote health messages in rural areas.

19. Emergency and routine health services were available in all parts of the country. While problems with access occasionally arose owing to sudden rains, all roads had been cleared of landmines since the end of the armed conflict and in principle all areas were accessible.

20. It was common for African populations to use mosquito nets for other purposes, such as fishing. The Government was implementing a campaign to combat that practice, involving radio and television advertisements and awareness-raising in local communities. As part of those efforts, activists from civil society visited families to explain the importance of mosquito nets and demonstrate their proper use. A survey would be carried out in July 2018 to gauge the effectiveness of the campaign. The Government was endeavouring to ensure that the whole population had access to mosquito nets, especially pregnant women and children under 5 years old.

21. Training was available for community health service providers in rural areas and had been conducted even during the armed conflict. Currently, the Ministry of Social Communication, the Ministry of Health and the Ministry for Social Action, the Family and the Advancement of Women were training community development officials to conduct awareness-raising at the grass-roots level regarding education, health and social assistance.

22. **Ms. Januário** (Angola) said that adoption was a judicial rather than an administrative process and was regulated by the Family Code. Adoptive parents were required to be over 25, to have the moral capacity to raise a child and to be able to provide a child with food and education. Their marital status was not taken into consideration. The process was the same for foreigners as for Angolan nationals. However, approval from the National Assembly was required for international adoptions. Children under the age of 18 whose parentage was unknown or who had been abandoned were eligible for adoption. Following adoption, the child could choose to take the family name of his or her adoptive parents and had the same rights as any biological children. Social workers provided ongoing support to adopted children. Children over the age of 10 were entitled to have their opinion heard regarding their adoption. Only a handful of adoptions took place each year, as children were often taken in by aunts or uncles. In those cases, social workers carried out assessments to ensure that children were not ill-treated.

23. In 2014, the Government had adopted legislation on human trafficking and had ratified the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the Convention. The President had established the Interministerial Commission to Combat Human Trafficking, which was guided in its work by the principles set out in the Protocol. A national plan to combat human trafficking was being drafted, and Angola was involved in coordinated efforts to reduce trafficking with other members of the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries. In addition, partnerships had been established with the Central African countries and with SADC, the International Organization for Migration and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. The Government had organized training on human trafficking and disseminated guidelines on the issue. Trafficking carried a sentence of 8 to 12 years' imprisonment, but there had not yet been any convictions as the legislation was so recent. The Department of State of the United States of America had recognized the Government's efforts to combat trafficking in its most recent Trafficking in Persons Report.

24. Abortion was currently a criminal offence. However, a new Criminal Code was being drafted. It had not yet been adopted because there was intense debate about whether abortion should be decriminalized. Amendments to the draft were being discussed, and it seemed that the best option would be to continue to criminalize abortion but allow for certain exceptions.

25. Public and private sector workers were entitled to three months' maternity leave. Mothers expecting more than one child received an extra month of leave for each additional baby. The law stipulated that mothers could take up to 30 days' annual leave to supplement their maternity leave.

26. Lastly, two protesters had been killed by police gunfire at the demonstration in Caluquembe referred to previously by the Committee. The law enforcement officer involved had been dismissed from the police force and would face criminal proceedings.

27. **Ms. Izata** (Angola) said that Angola had not yet acceded to the 1993 Hague Convention on Protection of Children and Cooperation in respect of Intercountry Adoption because the country's accession process was lengthy, involving detailed analysis, and adoption was in fact rare.

28. **Ms. Todorova** (Country Task Force) said that she wondered what types of alternative care were available, other than adoption. It would be useful to have further information on children living in institutions or foster care, for example. She would also like to know whether the Government had reservations regarding international adoption.

The meeting was suspended at 11.20 a.m. and resumed at 11.40 a.m.

29. **Ms. Teresinha** (Angola) said that, under the law, the State was obliged to take administrative, social and educational measures to protect children who were in situations of vulnerability or who were deprived of a family environment. A family reunification programme was being developed to enable such children to be returned to their own relatives or taken into foster families. Orphaned or abandoned children were placed in children's homes only as a last resort, when placement in a family environment was not possible. The "life project" for children in children's homes guaranteed them schooling, holistic personal development, social reintegration and rehabilitation. When they reached 17 years of age, they were given vocational education with a view to their subsequent entry into the labour market. The National Institute of the Child worked with churches to coordinate services for children outside the family environment.

30. **Ms. Ayoubi Idrissi** (Coordinator, Country Task Force) said that, while the State party's legislative framework was clearly comprehensive, she wished to know what measures were taken to ensure that the law was implemented. Despite being prohibited by law, child labour was persistent, in particular in agriculture, and also in its worst forms, with children from the Democratic Republic of the Congo working in appalling conditions in the State party's diamond mines. Similarly, with regard to trafficking in children, while the legislation in place was good, she wished to know what specific measures were taken to ensure the prevention and punishment of trafficking, and rehabilitation for victims.

31. **Ms. Mixinge** (Angola) said that offenders in cases of child labour were punished while victims were taken into the family reunification programme. If a child's family could be easily located, the child was returned immediately; otherwise, the child was taken into care while the family's whereabouts were determined. If family reunification took longer than three months, the child was integrated into the education system. The border with the Democratic Republic of the Congo was somewhat porous, which made migration difficult to monitor. Anyone exploiting children in Angolan territory was, however, liable to punishment under Angolan law. The Angolan authorities were working with UNICEF on family reunification in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

32. With regard to agriculture, children carried out basic tasks while learning about farming practices from their parents. Family agriculture was not a form of exploitation provided that parents respected their children's right to education. Engaging children in forced agricultural labour was, however, punishable by law. Teachers and social workers were well placed to identify and investigate anomalies in children's behaviour or school attendance indicating potentially harmful situations, such as abuse, exploitation or bullying. Complaint boxes had been placed in schools through which children could communicate any concerns they might have. Since peace had been restored in Angola, the risk of violence outside the family environment had reduced considerably, as had the number of children requiring foster care. Efforts were being made to raise awareness among adults of the dangers of exploiting children, and in particular to make it known that children born out of wedlock had the same rights as those born to married parents.

33. The various ethnic and linguistic groups in Angola coexisted harmoniously, and education was provided for all children in their local language. Some 3,000 children belonged to ethnic minorities and were integrated into mainstream schools. The procedures

in place to guarantee their access to education differed from region to region, according to the specificities of the communities concerned. Efforts were also made to ensure that adequate nutrition and health care were available in those communities. Particular challenges arose with regard to service coverage for the children of nomadic cattle herders.

34. Access to land was guaranteed for all, with measures being taken to ensure that women were recognized as landowners. In the case of polygamous households, in which a man could have up to five wives only one of whom would be recognized in law, steps were being taken to make sure that all the wives were named on the land registry and had ownership of their homes.

35. On the question of religious freedom, while young children tended simply to follow their parents' religion, minors were entitled to make their own religious choices and inform their parents of their preferences. An interministerial commission had been established to monitor the implementation of legislation on freedom of belief and worship. Churches provided social and spiritual support to children and their families, including in the form of family counselling. The National Institute of the Child cooperated with churches to ensure that any counselling provided was appropriate and sought to identify any situations in which a child's well-being was endangered. In such cases, the judicial authorities would be informed.

36. **Ms. Aho Assouma** asked what was being done to improve health-care infrastructure. She was concerned about information that certain services, such as the issue of medical certificates attesting to sexual abuse, were not provided free of charge in the State party. Were there any child psychiatrists specifically trained to treat children who had been victims of sexual abuse?

37. **Ms. Ayoubi Idrissi** asked whether the age of criminal responsibility would be raised under the ongoing reform of the Criminal Code. She also wished to know whether the prohibition of polygamy had been effective and what specific measures were taken to ensure that the prohibition on female genital mutilation was enforced.

38. **Ms. Mixinge** (Angola) said that additional health facilities were being built while health centres were being provided with new equipment. Health workers were being trained. In rural areas, health coverage challenges persisted owing to the considerable distances between settlements. Female genital mutilation was not practised by Angolans but was sometimes practised by non-nationals resident in Angola. Perpetrators would be held accountable under Angolan law. Migration legislation was currently being revised to ensure that all families in Angola, regardless of their country of origin, had access to essential services and respected Angolan law.

39. **Ms. Januário** (Angola) said that primary health care was provided free of charge and included the medical assessment of victims of sexual abuse, which was conducted by the forensic laboratory. The State was responsible for investigating and punishing cases of sexual abuse. According to a national survey, female genital mutilation, which was an offence under the Criminal Code, was not a traditional practice in Angola. A warning system had been set up jointly with hospitals and State services to prevent female genital mutilation in migrant families and communities. The Angolan authorities were participating in an African Union campaign to prevent and prohibit female genital mutilation. All forms of discrimination on grounds of gender identity and sexual orientation were also criminalized.

40. With regard to juvenile justice, 16 years would be maintained as the age of criminal responsibility. The number of minors in detention had decreased considerably in recent years. Minors received differentiated treatment in detention and pretrial detention, according to the type of offence they had committed. In detention, there was a focus on recreational activities and reintegration into society. Trials for minors were expedited to ensure that they spent the shortest possible time remanded in custody. Churches and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) provided social support to inmates who were minors, and prison visits were conducted by representatives of the National Institute of the Child. The provinces where detention conditions for minors were of the greatest concern were those with major urban settlements. There were some provinces, on the other hand, where there was no one under the age of 18 years in custody.

41. Officials from the Ministry for Social Action, the Family and the Advancement of Women were discussing the advisability of setting up facilities specifically for minors in conflict with the law with their counterparts from the Ministry of the Interior. Alternatives to detention, such as community service, were provided for. Efforts to ensure that such alternatives were turned to more frequently needed to be made, however.

42. The country had centres for the support of victims of human trafficking. Children in those centres, including children who did not speak Portuguese, received educational, health, psychological and legal assistance. Other children who were waiting to be reunited with their families benefited from the same support system. The ongoing expansion of the system of warnings that were triggered in the event of suspicions of human trafficking would facilitate the Government's efforts to combat the phenomenon.

43. Fewer than one hundred children were living with their imprisoned mothers. The authorities had concluded that the potential harm done to a child, a nursing child in particular, as a result of separation from the imprisoned mother was much greater than the harm he or she was likely to suffer from being in prison. Children could stay with their mothers in prison up to the age of 3, at which point the mother named a person with whom she wished her child to be placed. The child could also be placed in an institution.

44. **Ms. Mixinge** (Angola) said that she wished to reiterate her Government's commitment to the promotion and protection of the rights of the child. The dialogue with the Committee would enable the Angolan authorities to respond with renewed vigour to the many challenges they faced.

Initial report of Angola on the implementation of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict (CRC/C/OPAC/AGO/1; CRC/C/OPAC/AGO/Q/1 and CRC/C/OPAC/AGO/Q/1/Add.1)

45. **Mr. Madi** (Country Rapporteur) said that he wished to know whether the State party intended to define the recruitment of children under the age of 15 as a war crime. He wondered what body coordinated the Government's efforts to implement the Optional Protocol and what specific measures had been taken to familiarize the public — children in particular — with it. An explanation of the steps that had been taken to provide training to persons working with children who were likely to have been involved in armed conflict would be welcome, as would comprehensive data on refugee and asylum-seeking children who had entered the State party after possibly having been used in hostilities abroad and on the use of children by armed groups in Cabinda Province.

46. He wondered what measures had been taken to prohibit and criminalize the recruitment and use in hostilities of children under the age of 18 by the armed forces, non-State armed groups, police forces, militias and private security companies. The information contained in paragraph 22 (e) of the State party's initial report (CRC/C/OPAC/AGO/1), in which it was stated that military criminal law did not apply to children under the age of 16, caused him to wonder whether it applied to 16- and 17-year-olds. He also wondered whether plans had been made to ensure that the tests used to determine a prospective recruit's age in the absence of a birth certificate could be administered in all parts of the country. Lastly, he wished to know whether, under the Military Service Act (Act No. 1/93), a person could be recruited on 1 January of the year he turned 18 or whether it was necessary to wait until his birthday.

47. **Ms. Skelton** (Country Rapporteur) said that she wished to know what was being done to combat impunity for crimes covered in the Optional Protocol, in particular since it would not be unlikely for Angola to find itself playing host to victims of war crimes committed in such countries as the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In that connection, she wondered whether mechanisms had been put in place to assist such victims and whether efforts had been made to establish extraterritorial jurisdiction over crimes under the Optional Protocol.

48. She would welcome confirmation that the amounts allocated to advocacy, prevention and intervention programmes that appeared in the tables in the State party's initial report were in kwanzas, the local currency. It would be interesting to know what

activities or services the programmes to reintegrate former combatants involved. It would also be interesting to know why information on the number of children who had fought in the Angolan civil war was sometimes contradictory and whether the services available to former child soldiers were provided to them regardless of whether they had fought with the government or the rebel forces.

49. The delegation should provide an update on the efforts that were being made to identify unaccompanied minors arriving in the State party from Kasai Province in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where they could have been used in hostilities. An indication of the progress made towards full removal of landmines and other forms of unexploded ordnance, which had a disproportionate impact on children, would also be welcome.

Initial report of Angola on the implementation of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography (CRC/C/OPSC/AGO/1; CRC/C/OPSC/AGO/Q/1 and CRC/C/OPSC/AGO/Q/1/Add.1)

50. **Mr. Kotrane** (Country Rapporteur) said that he wished to know what plans had been made to ensure the collection of relevant data, which, as the State party itself had acknowledged in its initial report (CRC/C/OPSC/AGO/1), were lacking. It would be particularly useful to have disaggregated data on both the victims and the perpetrators of crimes covered in the Optional Protocol.

51. He asked what measures were planned to ensure that all such crimes, including forced child labour, were addressed in the State party's criminal law, that the perpetrators were prosecuted and that laws protecting children protected them up to the age of 18. It would be interesting to learn whether the State party intended to establish the liability of legal persons for crimes under the Protocol.

52. He would welcome an indication of the steps taken by the State party to establish jurisdiction over offences committed abroad by one of its nationals or by a foreign national resident in the State party and over offences committed against Angolan children abroad. Similarly, he wondered what measures had been planned or taken to ensure that, in the absence of an extradition treaty, the Optional Protocol was considered a legal basis for extradition in respect of the offences referred to in article 3 (1). Lastly, it would be interesting to learn more about the efforts being made by the State party to protect child victims of and witnesses to crime.

53. **Mr. Mezmur** (Country Rapporteur) said that he would welcome more information about the national action plan to combat the commercial sexual exploitation of children mentioned in paragraph 12 of the State party's initial report. It would be helpful to know, for example, whether the plan, which was nearly twenty years old, was still in place, whether it covered all the offences specified in the Optional Protocol, whether its impact had been evaluated and, if so, what the outcome of the evaluation had been. A comment on the specific results of the partnerships — with the World Health Organization, ILO, Terre des Hommes International Federation and other organizations — mentioned in paragraph 48 of the initial report would be welcome, as would an indication of whether the regional research into the root causes of child prostitution, child pornography and the sale of children, also referred to in paragraph 48, had been conducted. If so, what were the findings?

54. He wondered whether there was a government body responsible for coordinating efforts to implement the Optional Protocol. He would welcome a clarification of how the training provided by the Ministry of Education related to the Protocol. In addition, he wished to know whether the funds allocated to activities for the implementation of the Protocol had increased or decreased in recent years and whether the authorities considered the funds allocated for that purpose to be sufficient.

55. He asked whether NGOs were tasked by the Government with operating shelters and providing other services and, if so, whether the Government monitored their work. It would be interesting to know more about the 2004 evaluation of the action plan adopted for Matala and Santa Clara, towns in the southern provinces of Huíla and Cunene, respectively,

where instances of child labour, cross-border trafficking of children, child prostitution and child pornography had been identified.

56. He would welcome information on the ability of the Migration and Aliens Unit to identify likely victims of the offences covered in the Optional Protocol and on how the Unit dealt with such victims. He wondered how effective and widely known the anonymous reporting page of the National Police website was and to what extent it was used to collect data. Lastly, he wished to know whether the National Development Plan for 2018–2022 and the future National Strategy for Education in Human Rights addressed issues relevant to the Optional Protocol.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.

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Summary record (partial)* of the 2288th meeting
Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Wednesday, 16 May 2018, at 3 p.m.

Chair: Mr. Nelson (Vice-Chair)

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* No summary record was prepared for the rest of the meeting.

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In the absence of Ms. Winter, Mr. Nelson, Vice-Chair, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Consideration of reports of States parties (*continued*)

Initial report of Angola on the implementation of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict (*continued*) (CRC/C/OPAC/AGO/1; CRC/C/OPAC/AGO/Q/1 and CRC/C/OPAC/AGO/Q/1/Add.1)

Initial report of Angola on the implementation of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography (*continued*) (CRC/C/OPSC/AGO/1; CRC/C/OPSC/AGO/Q/1 and CRC/C/OPSC/AGO/Q/1/Add.1)

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of Angola took places at the Committee table.*

2. **Ms. Mixinge** (Angola), introducing her country's reports, said that, despite the challenges Angola had faced since the end of the armed conflict in 2002, the Government had demonstrated its commitment to children's rights and well-being by drawing up the 11 Commitments for Children. The main framework for government action to implement the Optional Protocols was commitment 8, on the prevention of violence against children.

3. With regard to the involvement of children in armed conflict, the minimum age for recruitment into the armed forces was 21 years, although all young men were registered for military service at the age of 18 years. The register facilitated monitoring of the reserve and renewal of armed forces personnel as required.

4. Over 30,000 refugees from the Democratic Republic of the Congo enjoyed protection in Lunda Norte Province, where they received assistance from the Government of Angola, United Nations agencies and international humanitarian organizations. Eleven child soldiers from Congolese militias had been identified among the refugees. Portuguese language classes had been organized to facilitate refugee children's access to education, and almost one hundred unaccompanied minors had been placed in foster care. The reception centre included a child-friendly space for some 210 children under the age of 5.

5. The Government had taken a number of measures aimed at the social reintegration of groups who had been directly affected by the armed conflict in Angola. Traditional leaders had been made aware of the need to pay special attention to vulnerable groups, including children, in the reintegration process.

6. There was a whole range of legislative measures to combat the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography: the Money Laundering Act (Act No. 3/14) protected children from procuring, sex trafficking and slavery and punished those who bought or sold a child under the age of 14 for the purposes of adoption; the Act on the Protection and Development of the Child (Act No. 25/12) protected children from negligence, discrimination, violence, cruelty and exploitation; and the Advertising Act (Act No. 9/17) prohibited any advertising that associated the image of children with stereotypical or discriminatory behaviour or indecent acts. Presidential Decree 235/14 had provided for the establishment of the Interministerial Commission to Combat Human Trafficking, which organized protection, assistance and rehabilitation services for trafficking victims, in cooperation with various State and non-State agencies and organizations.

7. Other measures included a campaign to raise awareness of the harmful effects of child labour and to help parents understand the difference between children performing domestic chores and the exploitation of child labour, which was a criminal offence. Presidential Decree 30/17 listed the jobs that were prohibited for minors or that were subject to authorization. The national action plan to combat the commercial sexual exploitation of children, which dated from 1999, was in the process of being revised. A child helpline had been set up to combat violence against children, with a face-to-face component that was already in operation and had registered over 10,000 complaints between 2015 and 2017.

8. The National Development Plan for 2018-2022, which replaced the one that had expired in 2017, would serve as the basis for future programmes designed to safeguard the rights and interests of the most vulnerable in society, especially children, and was one of a number of initiatives to combat poverty and increase access to basic social services.

9. **Ms. Januário** (Angola), responding to questions raised at the previous meeting, said that recruitment by private security companies was regulated; no one with a criminal record or under the age of 18 years could be hired by them because of the nature of the work. If a company failed to comply with the regulations, it faced a fine or the withdrawal of its operating licence.

10. The Ministry of Justice and Human Rights was the institution with overall responsibility for the implementation of the Optional Protocols. The task of coordinating the work, however, was delegated to a commission which, among other things, oversaw the work of the bodies responsible for implementing commitment 8 of the 11 Commitments for Children. The Convention and the two Optional Protocols had been publicized by means of brochures, radio and television broadcasts and information materials developed by the National Institute of the Child and the former National Council for Children. Information was also available online, and the Optional Protocols, like other human rights instruments, were the subject of judicial and police training courses.

11. Current criminal legislation did not cover all aspects of human trafficking; the draft Criminal Code now before the National Assembly would fill that gap. The new national plan to combat human trafficking, which was in the final stages of preparation, would focus on the four Ps of the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (the Trafficking in Persons Protocol): prevention, protection, prosecution and partnership. While precise figures were hard to come by, at least ten cases of human trafficking, including trafficking for the purposes of sexual and labour exploitation, had been tried by the courts. Angola was about to start using a software programme developed by the Southern African Development Community (SADC) that would make it considerably easier to track cases of human trafficking inside the country and in the region; it would, for example, allow the Angolan authorities to trace Angolan children who had been trafficked to Namibia for the purposes of labour exploitation. The National Criminal Investigation Directorate had recently established an anti-trafficking unit and there were plans to train police officers working in border areas — especially in the areas bordering on Namibia, Zambia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo — to detect and deal with trafficking. People smuggling was rife in those areas, and the authorities were tackling it with help from non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other partners, including the International Organization for Migration (IOM).

12. The Tourism Code of Conduct against the Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Children had been approved pursuant to a 2010 executive decree, which defined the liability of individuals and companies for such offences. The national action plan to combat the commercial sexual exploitation of children provided for an early warning system and was implemented with support from NGOs.

13. As for the Government's efforts to combat impunity, under the National Strategy for Education in Human Rights, training was provided for law enforcement officials, particularly those on the front line, to make sure that they all understood the concept of accountability. So far, over 1,000 police officers had been held to account for misconduct or human rights violations: their punishments had ranged from warnings or other disciplinary action to dismissal, orders to pay compensation and criminal prosecution.

14. Angola had acceded to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court but had not yet ratified it, for reasons explained during the State party's universal periodic review by the Human Rights Council. Not being a party to the Statute did not absolve Angola of its responsibilities of course. It was bound by bilateral and other multilateral judicial cooperation agreements, notably with other members of the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries and SADC.

15. A bill on victim and witness protection was in the process of being drafted with the aim of providing greater protection for victims of human trafficking. It would draw on best

practices from other countries and would be in line with the Trafficking in Persons Protocol and the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime.

16. **Mr. Madi** (Country Rapporteur for the Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict) said that he would appreciate clarification of the minimum age for recruitment by the armed forces, militias and private security companies and of the related age verification procedures.

17. **Ms. Januário** (Angola) said that the minimum age for registering for military service was 18. In practice, however, most of those registered were not recruited until the age of 21, if at all. Age verification was conducted only on recruitment.

18. **Mr. Malovoloneke** (Angola) said that many young people volunteered to join the army as a career choice. Recruits had to have a minimum of 8 years' schooling. The fact that everyone who attended school was required to have a birth certificate allowed the age of recruits to be verified.

19. No militias existed in the country. Security companies were not permitted to hire adolescents under the age of 18 in accordance with the country's labour laws and faced sanctions if they did so. A large proportion of security companies hired former members of the armed forces, as part of the Government's demobilization and reintegration programmes.

20. **Mr. Madi** said that he wondered whether adolescents could be registered for military service in the year in which they turned 18, or only from their eighteenth birthday. Since relatively few Angolan citizens held birth certificates, he would like to know how the age of males recruited into the armed forces could be verified accurately. According to the State party's report (CRC/C/OPAC/AGO/1, para. 21 (c)), two witnesses could attest to the age of a recruit who did not possess identification papers; that did not constitute proper age verification.

21. He was not aware of any provisions in the State party's criminal law that specifically prohibited the recruitment of persons under the age of 18 into non-State armed groups in accordance with article 4 of the Optional Protocol. He would appreciate the delegation's comments in that regard.

22. **Ms. Mixinge** (Angola) said that registration for military service could take place only after a person's eighteenth birthday. Those who did not hold valid identification would not be able to meet the registration requirements.

23. **Ms. Skelton** (Country Rapporteur for the Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict), noting that the delegation had referred to facilities at a reception centre for some 210 children under the age of 5, asked how it was possible for so many young children to be separated from their parents.

24. **Ms. Mixinge** (Angola) said that a national commission had been established after the end of the armed conflict in Angola to promote the social reintegration of former soldiers and displaced persons. The commission had returned some 500,000 conflict-affected children to their families or placed them with substitute families. The 210 children referred to were housed at a reception centre established specifically for refugee children.

25. The majority of the funds for the Government's plan for local development and combating poverty had been earmarked for the reintegration of veterans, 88,000 of whom would receive assistance over the next five years. Veterans who had fought for the opposition National Front for the Liberation of Angola (FNLA) and National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) received the same treatment as government soldiers. Demining was a major challenge. Between 1996 and 2017, mines had been cleared from approximately 3,500 square kilometres of land. Development infrastructure was put in place as areas were demined.

26. **Ms. Januário** (Angola) said that the Criminal Code contained a section on war crimes and crimes against national security, which covered the recruitment of children for the armed forces, for use as mercenaries or for non-State armed groups.

27. **Ms. Mixinge** (Angola), turning to the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, said that the Ministry for Social Action, the Family and the Advancement of Women was taking measures to raise moral standards and promote healthy behaviour among children and adolescents. There was a range of programmes, with quantifiable targets, for the promotion and protection of children's rights. Under one such programme, for example, 30,000 cases of violence against children would be resolved by 2022 and awareness-raising on children's rights would be provided to some 500,000 people. It was also planned to strengthen complaint mechanisms, build shelters for child victims of violence, and enhance psychosocial support for children in conflict with the law and child abuse victims. The Government was in the process of establishing a national observatory for children.

28. Children could travel only with authorization from their parents or guardians, or from the juvenile courts. When the police were informed of cases in which children had been taken from one province to another without such authorization, those children were immediately returned to their families. The Government was strengthening its partnerships with other SADC member States to enhance monitoring of cross-border movement of children.

29. Public libraries and Internet centres were monitored by trained staff to ensure that children did not access inappropriate content. Awareness-raising campaigns for children, particularly girls, sought to inform them of the risks encountered online. Reports of offences committed against children via social networks were investigated promptly. Targeted budgets had been introduced to combat child abuse, exploitation and prostitution. A study was being carried out, in conjunction with various civil society organizations, to gather data on street children in Luanda and understand how such children fell prey to prostitution rings. Lastly, the Domestic Violence Act (Act No. 25/11) required families to report any situation that might endanger children.

30. **Mr. Kotrane** (Country Rapporteur for the Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography) said that the delegation's responses had focused on international trafficking in children, rather than the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, which were not necessarily cross-border phenomena. The delegation had spoken of closing the gaps in the legislation on trafficking; the State party must also ensure that all aspects of the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography were criminalized. He would appreciate information on extraterritorial jurisdiction over those offences. He also wished to know what the Government had done to address the sexual exploitation of children in the tourism industry and online.

31. **Mr. Mezmur** (Country Rapporteur for the Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography) said that the State party report (CRC/C/OPSC/AGO/1) did not provide clear information about protection against online offences involving the sexual exploitation and abuse of children. Was there a legal framework in that regard? He would also like to hear more about the implementation of the Tourism Code of Conduct against the Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Children. Had it improved the accountability of the tourism industry? Were tourism establishments reporting under the Code and had they included provisions on sexual exploitation and abuse in their contracts?

32. **The Chair** said that, in view of reports that children as young as 12 had been prosecuted for criminal offences, he would appreciate confirmation of the age of criminal majority, meaning the age at which an individual was liable to be tried as an adult.

33. **Ms. Ayoubi Idrissi** said that she wished to know whether offences related to the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography that had been committed abroad were prosecuted in accordance with the dual criminality principle. In cases where the State party did not have an extradition treaty with another country, could the Optional Protocol be used as a basis for extradition?

34. **Ms. Skelton** said that she would appreciate it if the delegation could confirm the State party's participation in the ongoing global study on children deprived of liberty.

The meeting was suspended at 4.25 p.m. and resumed at 4.45 p.m.

35. **Ms. Mixinge** (Angola) said that the Act on the Protection and Development of the Child provided for measures to prevent access by children to inappropriate virtual content and to address the risk of such content being disseminated using virtual means of communication. It established that material or information that was considered pornographic or that could incite violence must not be made available to children. However, families were responsible for monitoring the use of electronic media in their own homes. The Tourism Code of Conduct was a joint initiative of the Ministry of Hospitality and Tourism and the Ministry of Assistance and Social Reintegration, which were tasked with carrying out monitoring and inspections of tourism establishments together with the police.

36. **Ms. Januário** (Angola) said that the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography were prohibited in national legislation. The aim of the Tourism Code of Conduct was to prevent sexual exploitation of children and provide for monitoring and oversight of the tourism industry. For example, hotel employees were required to request the identity documents of minors travelling with adults and establish the relationship between adult and minor. Tourism establishments could be held responsible for offences committed on their premises. The penalties imposable under the Criminal Code ranged from a warning or fine to the closure of an establishment or the imprisonment of the owner for up to 10 years. Pursuant to the Tourism Code of Conduct, the relevant authorities could carry out visits to establishments to ensure compliance with the Code's provisions. Since the adoption of the Code, there had been a drop in offences committed against children in tourist areas. Any person witnessing an offence in a public place was compelled by law to report it.

37. The Angolan customs and port authorities had a traceability system allowing them to monitor material entering the country. If prohibited material, including child pornography, was uncovered, it was immediately destroyed and the importer was held liable. The discovery of prohibited material could lead to criminal proceedings.

38. A bill on online crimes was awaiting the approval of the National Assembly, and transitional legislation was in place to ensure that offences committed online were sanctioned appropriately; several recent cases involving social networks were under investigation. A criminal investigation unit had been established to detect and investigate online offences, along with a dedicated unit under the Attorney General. Training in information technology was provided to judicial and law enforcement officers to ensure that they had the necessary expertise to deal with such cases. Complaints made by the public were duly investigated, although it could be difficult to regulate and monitor websites and social networks, with child pornography posing particular challenges in that regard.

39. **Ms. Mixinge** (Angola) said that the Government carried out ongoing assessments of its child protection systems with support from the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). Such assessments played an important role in improving understanding of the issues affecting children, increasing accountability in the relevant sectors and ensuring that the best interests of the child were respected. The Government had designated a month in which all relevant stakeholders were invited to discuss child protection measures.

40. **Ms. Januário** (Angola) said that the minimum age at which an individual could be tried as an adult was 16. A draft amendment to the Criminal Code on maintaining that age had been submitted for the approval of the National Assembly following a debate. Data, disaggregated by province, were available on the number of adolescents aged between 16 and 18 who were held in detention centres. Minors deprived of their liberty were provided with differentiated treatment and special cells, irrespective of their offence and whether they were held in pretrial detention or had been convicted. Minors could also be given non-custodial sentences.

41. If and when necessary, requests for extradition could be made on the basis of an extradition treaty or, in the absence of such a treaty, by means of letters rogatory or similar judicial mechanisms. In the case of crimes against children, the Convention and the two Optional Protocols were recognized as a sufficient basis for an extradition request.

42. A few years previously, the Angolan judicial authorities had granted an extradition request made in respect of an Angolan national accused of having committed serious crimes

in a State with which Angola did not have an extradition treaty, having concluded that the extradition would not have a detrimental effect on the individual in question. In another case, however, the authorities had denied a request to extradite nationals of the Democratic Republic of the Congo residing in Angola, as the crimes of which they stood accused carried the death penalty in their country of origin. It had been determined that, once the persons in question had served their prison sentences, they would be allowed to remain in Angola. The authorities had also cooperated with the International Criminal Court in a case involving an individual accused of genocide who was residing in the country.

43. The Government considered the global study on children deprived of liberty to be a useful tool for examining the issue and identifying best practices. The study might also provide Committee members with a better understanding of juvenile justice in Angola.

44. **Ms. Ayoubi Idrissi** said that it was still not clear to her from what age a child could be held responsible for a criminal act in Angola.

45. **Ms. Januário** (Angola) said that the minimum age was currently set at 16 years.

46. **The Chair** asked how 14- and 15-year-olds who were accused of having committed a criminal offence were dealt with in Angola.

47. **Ms. Januário** (Angola) said that minors under the age of 16 who committed a criminal offence could not be held criminally liable for their actions. Instead, their cases were referred to the juvenile courts, which would prescribe the appropriate correctional measures. Special observation centres were responsible for applying those measures. Offences committed by minors under the age of 16 did not remain on their records when they reached the age of majority.

48. **The Chair** asked whether children under the age of 16 could still be charged with a criminal offence, even though they would subsequently be dealt with by the juvenile courts.

49. **Ms. Januário** (Angola) said that minors between the ages of 14 and 16 could indeed be charged with a criminal offence.

50. **Ms. Aho Assouma** asked what had become of the Turkish nationals who had sought asylum in Angola, given that the Turkish school that had taken them in had closed. It would also be useful to know whether there was a programme in place to assist child mine victims.

51. **Ms. Januário** (Angola) said that, as the case concerning the Turkish school known as Colégio Esperança Internacional was ongoing, the details relating to it had to remain confidential. However, it was public knowledge that a request had been received under a judicial cooperation agreement in respect of a terrorism-related case involving one of the school's administrators. The school had been temporarily closed but had been reopened a few days later and continued to operate normally. The administrators of the school had subsequently agreed that the share in the school of the individual named in the case would be sold.

52. A broad range of programmes had been put in place to support and rehabilitate mine victims, including children, in the post-conflict period. The construction of a prosthetic limb factory had greatly facilitated the rehabilitation process for those individuals. Angola had long been a theatre of war and consequently had one of the highest concentrations of landmines in the world. As part of its demining efforts, the Government had called for a moratorium on the use of landmines and had begun the process of marking and clearing minefields with the support of international partners. It was hoped that Angola would be mine-free by 2025.

53. **Ms. Aho Assouma** said she had been informed that the State party had received an influx of refugees from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, many of whom had entered its territory in an irregular manner and were reportedly working in informal diamond mines. She asked whether the children among those refugees had been provided with special assistance and how the State party intended to address the situation.

54. **Ms. Mixinge** (Angola) said that Congolese refugees were accommodated in a reception centre and that many had already returned home voluntarily with the support of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). The Angolan

authorities considered persons who entered the country irregularly with the express intention of working in diamond mines to be illegal immigrants and to warrant different treatment from bona fide refugees. However, any children accompanying illegal immigrants were treated properly and returned home at the appropriate time. Special treatment was reserved for children irrespective of their parents' immigration or refugee status.

55. **Ms. Izata** (Angola) said that, contrary to the rumours circulating, Angola did not plan to expel the Congolese refugees, thousands of whom were receiving assistance from the Government and international agencies such as UNHCR and IOM. As for the case concerning the Colégio Esperança Internacional, the persons concerned would remain in Angola while their asylum applications were being considered by the Government and UNHCR.

56. **Mr. Malovoloneke** (Angola) said that persons with refugee status could not be considered to be in Angola illegally and were accorded the rights and received the treatment provided for under international law.

57. **Mr. Mezmur** said that he was grateful to the delegation for the constructive dialogue on the initial report of Angola submitted under the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography and trusted that the State party would pay careful attention to the Committee's concluding observations, which would address many of the issues raised during the dialogue.

58. **Ms. Skelton**, thanking the delegation for the enlightening dialogue on the initial report of Angola submitted under the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict, said that it would be helpful to receive an English translation of the laws most relevant to the subject at hand or, failing that, a translation of their key provisions.

59. **Mr. Madi** said that the State party should use the Committee's concluding observations to guide its efforts to close the gaps identified by the Committee in the implementation of the latter instrument. He looked forward to reviewing the progress made in that regard in the State party's next periodic report.

60. **Ms. Todorova** (Country Task Force), thanking the delegation for the informative dialogue on the combined fifth to seventh periodic reports of Angola submitted under the Convention (CRC/C/AGO/5-7), said that the Committee welcomed the commitment of the new Government of Angola to further promoting and protecting children's rights. She hoped that the 11 Commitments for Children could soon be fulfilled and that the State party would translate and disseminate widely the Committee's concluding observations, including to children in child-friendly language.

61. **Ms. Mixinge** (Angola) thanked the members of the Committee for the fruitful dialogue and their in-depth analysis of the reports submitted under the Convention and the two Optional Protocols and said that, going forward, the Government would endeavour to act on the suggestions and recommendations addressed to it and work to give full effect to the 11 Commitments for Children. She looked forward to receiving the Committee's concluding observations.

62. *The delegation of Angola withdrew.*

The discussion covered in the summary record ended at 5.40 p.m.